

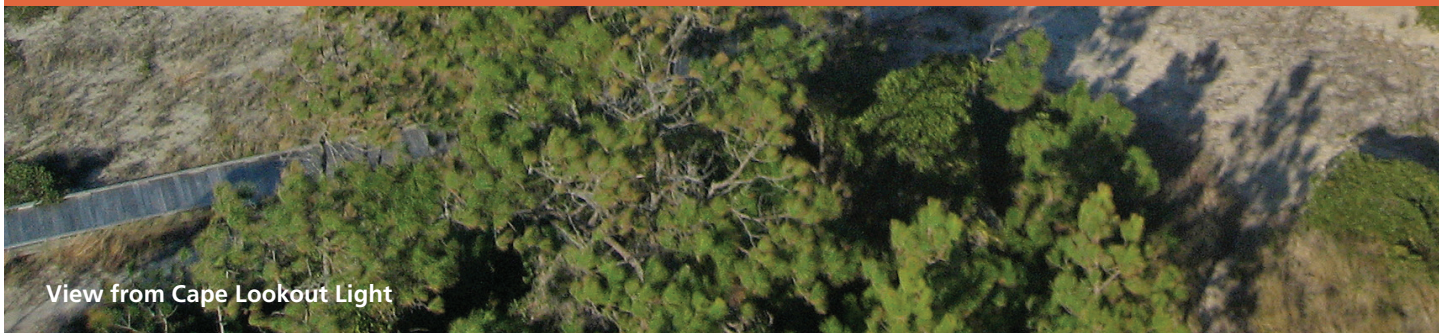


Cape Lookout National Seashore

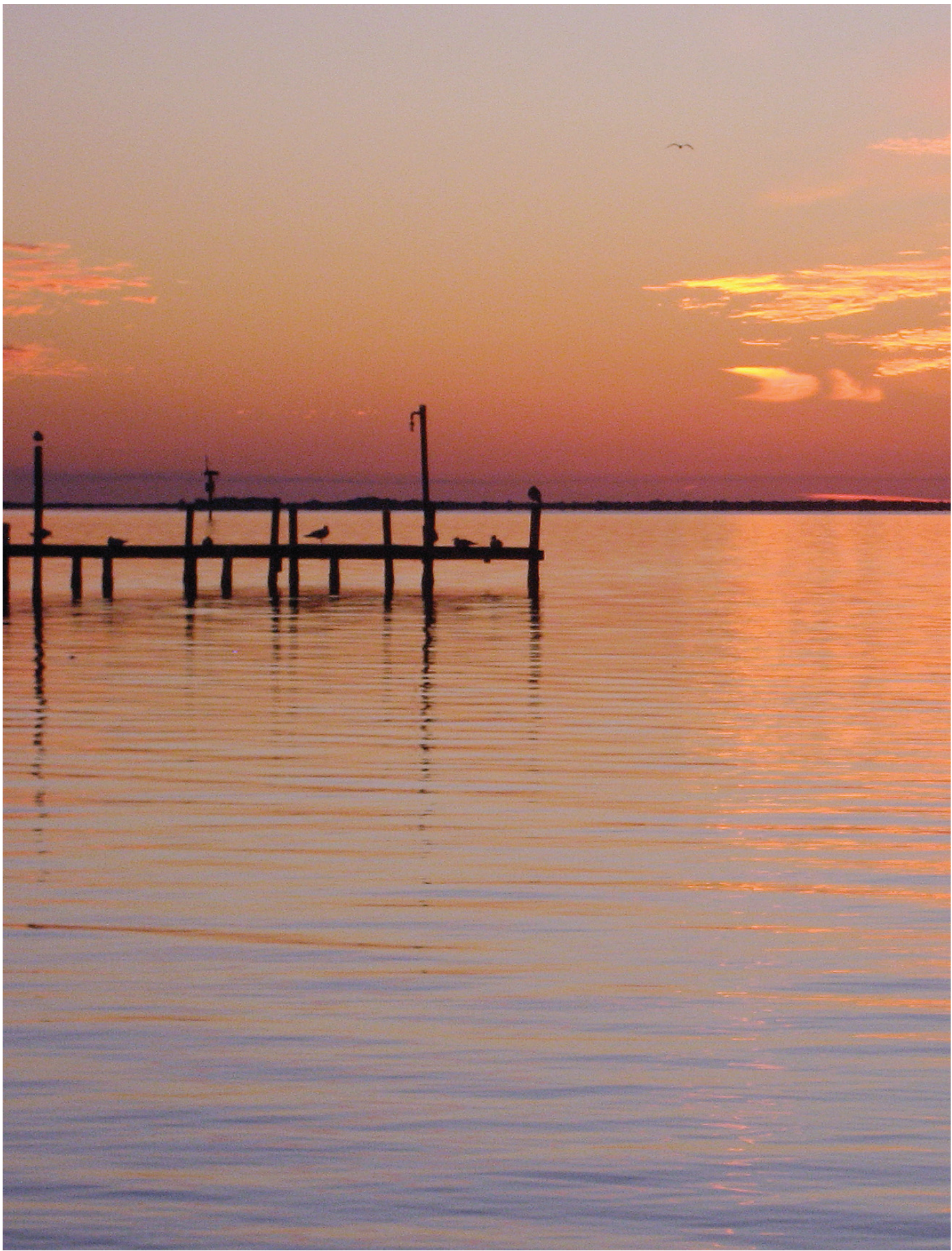
Long-Range Interpretive Plan



JUNE 2011



View from Cape Lookout Light





Cape Lookout National Seashore

Long-Range Interpretive Plan

Prepared by:

**National Park Service
Harpers Ferry Center, Interpretive Planning
and the staff of Cape Lookout National Seashore**

June 2011

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**





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Cape Lookout National Seashore







Introduction

Long-range interpretive planning at Cape Lookout National Seashore builds on prior planning initiatives. A FY 2000 Strategic Plan defined the park's significance and purpose, and a preliminary interpretive plan in 2003 drafted primary interpretive themes. In 2010, the planning strategy called for a Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) that builds on the existing thematic framework and recommends programs, media, and partnerships to be implemented in the next five to seven years.



Comprehensive Interpretive Planning

The National Park Service (NPS) has adopted a unified planning approach for interpretation and education. This approach combines planning for interpretive media, personal interpretive services, and education programs. The Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) is the basic planning document for interpretation and was formally adopted as part of NPS guidelines in 1995. Responsibility for creating the CIP lies with each park's superintendent.

Comprehensive Interpretive Plan

The CIP process provides guidance to park staff by clarifying objectives, identifying audiences, and recommending the best mix of media and personal services to use to convey park themes.

Although the CIP, as defined in Director's Order 6, is composed of



specific elements, good planning is customized to meet each park's needs and situation. The CIP is not a recipe. Rather, the CIP is a guide to effective, goal-driven planning. While it considers past interpretive programming, it is primarily a forward-looking document that concentrates on actions needed to create or sustain a vigorous and effective interpretive program for the future. All CIPs have three components: the LRIP, a series of Annual Implementation Plans (AIP), and an Interpretive Database (ID).

Long-Range Interpretive Plan

The heart of the CIP is the LRIP. The LRIP defines the overall vision and long-term (five to ten year) interpretive goals of the park. The process that develops the LRIP defines realistic strategies and actions that work toward achievement of the interpretive goals. The LRIP features two sections. The first or foundation section articulates significance, themes, and target audiences. The second section of the LRIP recommends interpretive services (for example: ranger talks and guided hikes), media (for example: wayside signs and audiovisual presentations), and partnerships that support the delivery of the interpretive program.

The Annual Implementation Plan and Interpretive Database

The completed LRIP is a critical part of the CIP, but it does not stand alone. Recommendations in the LRIP are divided into annual, achievable steps and are reproduced in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), the second component of the CIP.

The Annual Implementation Plan provides the park an opportunity to assess its progress in implementing LRIP recommendations during the fiscal year and identifies what needs to be accomplished next, in light of changing park conditions, program or project funding, and staff levels. The AIP can be accomplished independently as part of an internal division planning endeavor or as part of the annual parkwide strategic planning. The third component of the CIP is the Interpretive Database (ID), an ongoing compilation of information, reports, bibliographies, plans, and inventories that document the process of developing the LRIP and support the continued delivery of the interpretive program.

Legislative Background

The U.S. Congress authorized Cape Lookout National Seashore on March 10, 1966 (PL 89-366). The legislation stated:

In order to preserve for public use and enjoyment an area in the State of North Carolina possessing outstanding natural and recreational values, there is hereby authorized to be established the Cape Lookout National Seashore.

The enabling legislation defined the seashore to include “the outer banks of Carteret County, North Carolina, between Ocracoke Inlet and Beaufort Inlet, plus adjoining marshlands and waters.” The seashore was to be administered “for the general purposes of public outdoor recreation, including conservation of natural features

contributing to public enjoyment.” An administrative site at the eastern end of Harkers Island was authorized in the amending legislation (623-20, 009), dated March 1974.

Purpose

Park purpose statements describe why a site was set aside and what specific purposes exist for it. They are derived from legislation, legislative history, public participation, and public rule-making. Purpose statements provide the foundation for park management and visitor use and guide the development of the interpretive program. The park’s FY 2000 Strategic Plan stated the purpose of Cape Lookout National Seashore:

The purpose of Cape Lookout National Seashore is to conserve and preserve for public use and enjoyment the outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values of a dynamic coastal barrier island environment for future generations. The national seashore serves as both a refuge for wildlife and a pleasuring ground for the public, including the developed visitor amenities.

Significance

Park significance statements describe the distinctiveness of the combined resources of a park. The statements can reflect natural, cultural, scientific, recreational, inspirational, and other resources. They embody the power of

the place, and summarize the importance of the park’s resources to our natural and cultural heritage. Updated significance statements for Cape Lookout National Seashore are based on the park’s 2000 General Management Plan Amendment:

- *Cape Lookout National Seashore is nationally recognized as an outstanding example of a dynamic natural coastal barrier island system.*
- *The seashore preserves in a nearly natural state 56 miles of barrier islands, which combined with Cape Hatteras’ 76-mile length, forms and shelters the second largest estuarine system in the United States.*
- *The seashore is designated as a unit of the Carolinian-South Atlantic Biosphere Reserve, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) and Man and the Biosphere Reserve Program.*
- *The park contains cultural resources rich in the maritime history of humankind’s attempt to survive at the edge of the sea.*
- *Cape Lookout National Seashore contains critical habitat for endangered and threatened species and other unique wildlife including the legislatively protected wild horses of Shackleford Banks.*
- *The park also represents a conscious decision to restrict/control development, keeping the vast majority of the park natural and allowing to the greatest extent possible for natural processes/forces to take their course.*

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes embody the most important ideas, concepts, and issues to share, discuss, and consider with the public about a park and with which to encourage public investigation. They convey the significance of the resources and highlight the links between tangible elements, intangible meanings, and universal concepts that are inherent in the park's resources. The themes connect resources to larger processes, systems, ideas, and values. They define the core content of the educational messages the park offers, and serve as the building blocks upon which interpretive services and educational programs are based. Guided by well-developed park themes, interpretive programs can help to foster in visitors the development of an emotional connection or bond, leading to true stewardship of park resources.

Primary Interpretive Themes

A complete set of primary interpretive themes and subthemes for Cape Lookout National Seashore was developed during planning for a preliminary LRIP in 2003. During the 2010 planning endeavor, the planning team revisited the themes in order to identify necessary revisions. Indicated below are the revised themes and subthemes for Cape Lookout National Seashore.

THEME 1: Barrier Island Geology and Geography

Cape Lookout National Seashore's barrier islands are constantly reshaped by the dynamic relationship between environmental forces and geography,

such as the wind, the tremendous energy of waves and storms, global climate change and the accompanying sea level rise, the supply of sand, and the underlying coastal topography. When allowed to respond naturally, these barrier islands are best able to protect the North Carolina mainland from the devastating losses that might otherwise result from hurricanes and other storm surges.

SUBTHEMES:

1. Barrier islands are dynamic; they undergo continual change in response to smaller, long-term and gradual events (tides, winds, global climate change, and ocean sea level) as well as sudden high-energy events (storms, hurricanes).
2. The formation, migration, and location of barrier islands is a function of the amount of sand available, the geography and elevation of the coast, the underlying topography of the seabed, and the rise (or fall) of the ocean sea level.
3. Global warming and sea level rise pose some of the most significant practical and civic/governmental policy challenges for management of development on barrier islands and along coastlines throughout the world. Identifying appropriate mechanisms for mitigating human causes of global warming, and appropriate responses to coastal development, may be some of the most critical issues for the next 50-100 years.
4. Undeveloped barrier islands exist in a dynamic balance between the forces (wind, water, and waves) that deposit and erode the sands of the barrier



islands and their beaches. This equilibrium can easily be disrupted by human activities such as shoreline development, road building, construction of artificial dunes, jetties, seawalls, and groins, and the creation and maintenance of inlets and channels. However, left alone, barrier islands are never permanent, and with rising sea levels, this buffer zone may not exist in the future.

5. The history of barrier island migration is written in the mainland landscape of North Carolina; on the mainland throughout the Coastal

Plain and extending into the Piedmont, barrier island remnants can be seen in the shape of the land, a result of advancing and receding prehistoric seas.

6. Plant communities stabilize the islands by trapping the sand, allowing the barrier island to grow in size and elevation and thus countering the eroding forces of winds, waves, currents, and storms. Human activity, including the introduction of non-native species, can easily disrupt or change these communities.

**Cape Lookout Light
from the U.S. Coast
Guard dock**



Loggerhead Turtle
on a rare
daytime crawl

Horses on
Shackleford Banks



THEME 2: Barrier Island Ecology and Estuaries

As a consequence of their unique geology, ecology, and undeveloped condition, the barrier islands of Cape Lookout National Seashore are a refuge for plant communities and resident and migratory marine and terrestrial wildlife, including several threatened and endangered species. Together with Cape Hatteras National Seashore, the islands form and shelter the second largest estuarine system in the United States.

SUB-THEMES:

1. The NPS decision to maintain the barrier islands of Cape Lookout National Seashore in a largely undeveloped condition, where the effect of human intervention is minimized and natural processes dominate, allows them to serve as a natural laboratory for the study of barrier island dynamics and ecology. In stark contrast, many other coastal barrier islands have been intensely developed, are continually threatened, and are the subject of costly, mostly futile attempts to hold back the sea.

2. Cape Lookout National Seashore's undeveloped barrier islands provide unique and critical habitat for diverse and rare (threatened or endangered), wildlife and plants. Most of these species are specifically adapted to the changing and often harsh marine environment of the islands and are dependent on these habitats for their survival.

3. Recognized as the official North Carolina horse and legislatively protected as a cultural/historical resource, the population of Banker ponies on Shackleford Banks is one of the last wild horse populations on the east coast. Cape Lookout National Seashore combines scientific study with preservation to ensure the survival of a genetically healthy Banker horse population while closely monitoring and managing the impact of the horses on the barrier island environment of Shackleford Banks.

4. Second only to the Chesapeake Bay in size, the estuarine system formed and sheltered by the barrier islands of the outer banks provides spawning,



nursery, and feeding waters for a host of shorebirds, sea turtles, marine mammals, marine fish, and shellfish species. This critical habitat and the marine organisms that depend on it are increasingly threatened by siltation and non-point source pollution from development on the coast and from far inland (such as runoff from paved roads, parking lots, and sidewalks, and high fertilizer nutrient levels.)

5. Global warming and sea level rise will likely create significant changes in the outer banks barrier island chain, with a predicted long-term collapse of the entire Cape Hatteras section north of Ocracoke inlet, and potential collapse of major portions of the Pamlico Sound estuary.

6. Located where the southbound Labrador current and the northbound tropical Gulf Stream mix, the waters around Cape Lookout National Seashore host a surprisingly diverse array of sea life, including both northern and tropical fish, whales, seals, sea turtles, and significant deep-water coral beds offshore.

THEME 3: Cultural Geography

Since prehistoric times, people have been drawn to the North Carolina coast and barrier islands for sustenance, inspiration, and recreation. The struggle to survive in the harsh coastal environment of the Banks fostered the development of island communities with distinctive speech patterns, cultures, folkways, living traditions, and social ideology.

SUB-THEMES:

1. Physically isolated from the economic resources of larger communities and farms on the mainland by the sounds' waters, the people making Core Banks and Shackleford Banks their home relied heavily on the immediate resources of the islands and surrounding waters to sustain their lives.
2. The harsh environment and isolation made for a hardy people who were self-reliant and able to adapt to change. In small communities such as these, social rules and norms were adapted to fit the needs of the community – as in the case of women and children having to assume duties and roles that

Methodist Church,
Portsmouth Village

their mainland counterparts were not allowed or expected to fulfill.

3. The changing seasons set the pattern for living along the banks for Native Americans and the settlers who came later. Hunting, fishing, and migrating between the mainland and the islands followed the same ancient rhythms.

4. African-Americans who lived along the coast developed maritime skills alongside their Euro-American counterparts and found a measure of acceptance and freedom that was not as common for their counterparts living in the interior of North Carolina.



Portsmouth Village
Life-Saving Station

THEME 4: People and Commerce at the Edge of the Sea

Since prehistoric times, humankind has used the waters adjacent to the North Carolina coast for a full range of maritime activities, including sustenance, commerce, transportation, piracy, warfare, and recreation. The sea can be a dangerous place, and the relationship of humankind to the sea

has left a rich cultural, historical, and archeological legacy that factors large in the history of the Down East, the State of North Carolina, and the Nation.

SUB-THEMES:

1. Since prehistoric times, people using the coastal waters and barrier islands have dealt with conflict, nature and weather, advancements in transportation, human error, and mechanical malfunctions. People have experienced prosperity, but misfortunes also have lead to a significant human toll and high economic losses off the shores of the North Carolina barrier islands.

2. The inlets and protected anchorages of Ocracoke, Core Banks, and Cape Lookout's bight have played important roles in wars from the colonial era through World War II. As a result, these areas have seen the construction of fortifications and other war-time preparations in support of the defense of the Colony of North Carolina and the Nation.

3. The ocean waters off of North Carolina barrier islands became a battleground during World War II with the United States experiencing major losses from German submarine attacks. Due to the need for secrecy, few people outside the islands knew of the nation's significant loss of lives, ships, and cargoes that occurred during the first months of World War II.

4. Before the advent of railroads and today's jetports and superhighways, most of the nation's wealth and people moved by sail, and later by steamships along the coast. Protecting the shipping lanes that sent commercial

products around the world and brought back raw materials from outside the borders was paramount to the economic growth and safety of the developing Nation. These shipping lanes continue to be a vital part of the United States economy.

5. Economic losses and loss of life caused by the treacherous shoals and unpredictable weather at the confluence of the Gulf Stream and Labrador currents along the North Carolina coast resulted in a national effort to develop navigation aids such as the Cape Lookout lighthouses and lightships, and rescue services such as the U.S. Coast Guard and its predecessor agencies.

THEME 5: Recreation, Education and Visiting Cape Lookout

Cape Lookout provides outstanding recreational, educational, and inspirational opportunities in a remote natural setting, inspiring visitors to contemplate their relationship to the natural world, both within the park and at home.

SUB-THEMES:

1. Cape Lookout National Seashore offers a unique recreational setting where visitors may enjoy non-commercialized and self-reliant outdoor activities in a remote and natural setting.
2. Cape Lookout National Seashore provides an outdoor classroom where visitors may learn about the natural history of coastal North Carolina and the cultural and historic significance of the region. It is an invaluable resource—a living laboratory—for those involved in scholastic and/or recreational education.





Piping Plover chick,
a threatened species
at Cape Lookout
National Seashore

Recreation near Cape
Lookout Light



3. Cape Lookout National Seashore offers visitors a rare opportunity to step outside the hustle and bustle of a human-dominated, controlled world into a world where they, too, are part of nature instead of outside it. The serenity of a Cape Lookout National Seashore experience promotes emotional, spiritual, and inspirational opportunities to connect to this resource.

4. The seashore offers visitors a unique venue and lens through which to study the causes and effects of global warming. The surviving coastal features and landscapes of Portsmouth Village and the Cape Village Historic District provide observable lessons regarding the impact of changing ocean levels. Insights gained can inform future choices made by individuals and all levels of government regarding what is important to protect, and the impacts of potential development on treasured natural and cultural features.

Mission Goals

Each unit of the national park system develops mission goals based on those of the National Park Service.

- **Seashore staff** is able to focus its activities and use park resources effectively.
- **Seashore visitors** experience an enhanced understanding of the purpose of the seashore and an appreciation of what makes the park special.
- **Park neighbors** in surrounding communities understand and appreciate that the preservation of the national seashore's resources is undertaken for this and future generations.

Under the general category of “Preserve Park Resources,” the national seashore has developed the following mission goals:

Natural and cultural resources and associated values are **protected, restored, and maintained** in good condition and are managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.

- Long-term goals relate to protecting, restoring, and maintaining natural areas, threatened and endangered species, archaeo-

logical sites, historic structures, and objects.

Cape Lookout National Seashore **contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources** and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.

- Park managers must be able to use scholarly and scientific information to ensure that decisions that are made will not adversely affect the national seashore's resources.

Under the general category of “Provide for Public Enjoyment and Visitor Experience,” the national seashore has developed the following mission goals:

Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of Cape Lookout's facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.

- Visitors must be able to enjoy and experience Cape Lookout National Seashore safely.
- Accessibility for special populations must be provided where appropriate.
- The diversity and quality of the national seashore's facilities, services, and recreational opportunities must be considered for all visitors without being harmful to park resources or inconsistent with the national seashore's purpose and philosophy.

Management Goals

First and foremost, the interpretive program at Cape Lookout National Seashore must be in alignment with the NPS guidance found in the 21st Century Report (2010), the Director's Goals (2010), and the Interpretation Renaissance documents (2003). These goals describe management priorities and emphasis for offering interpretive and educational programs and services in the national park system. They set a direction for the LRIP and articulate desired outcomes for the resulting interpretive program.

In addition, the following park-specific priorities will be integrated into the above NPS goals:

1. Emphasize outreach beyond park boundaries, especially to local schools. Expand the coverage from the present grades 6-8 to cover K-5.
2. Explore distance learning opportunities, especially those that involve children in content development.
3. Balance nature-based and culture-based stories, especially emphasizing natural resource protection/management strategies.
4. Reaffirm cultural stories that are park-specific (i.e., based on resources within the park) and link them to heritage stories of the Down East (which will be the focus of the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center and others.) Emphasize the need for preservation and management of cultural resources.
5. Emphasize partnering with local



**Preparing to
climb the Light**

interpretation and education organizations. In particular, identify key partners, such as the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center, the Friends of Portsmouth Island, the Friends of Cape Lookout National Seashore, the North Carolina Maritime Museum (and others), and promote a variety of cooperative efforts across a broad spectrum of shared program areas.

6. Emphasize program sustainability: how can programs be maintained once initial grant funding has run out?

7. Emphasize volunteer training/recruitment, as well as opportunities for community service within the park.

Audiences for Interpretive Services

Audiences for interpretive and education services at Cape Lookout National Seashore can be grouped into five or six categories. The reason for categorizing audiences lies in whether or not a particular audience requires communication in a way that is distinct from that of the general park audience. Factors to consider include the life experiences of the individual or group, level of education, age level, learning styles, native language, cultural traditions, and time available for interaction, among others. Cape Lookout National Seashore's audiences can be grouped as follows:

- Recreational visitors: mainly spring, summer and fall (March through November).
 - Cultural heritage tourists (mainly Lighthouse, Portsmouth, Cape Village): day visitors; all year, but most in summer.
 - Eco-tourists/environmentalists: all year, but most in summer.
 - Schools and educational groups and scouts seeking curriculum support: mainly spring and fall.
 - Virtual visitors/web site: 24/7 support.
 - Beginning fishermen/recreationalists/boaters/campers: both day use and overnight; spring, summer and fall.
- In order to inform the LRIP process, the Cape Lookout National Seashore staff developed a written summary of their observations of park visitors and visitor groups. See Appendix A for these visitor profiles.

Visitor Experience Goals

Visitors come to Cape Lookout National Seashore seeking something of personal value for themselves. Their desired visitor experience could relate to natural, cultural, educational, scientific, recreational, spiritual, inspirational, and other experiences and values that involve the intangible characteristics of the park's resources. They also seek information and orientation to help plan and shape their visit. This orientation includes learning about the range of activities and educational opportunities available in the park and the region (in particular and in coordination with partner organizations) and about the local, regional, national, and global context in which the park's resources are significant.

Needed By All Audiences

INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION. Some information and orientation needs are common to all audiences. These include:

- Safety messages.
- Messages designed to protect park resources.
- Information on practical matters regarding their visit, such as:
 - ◆ Accessibility for persons with disabilities.
 - ◆ What is provided/what to bring.
 - ◆ Seasonal variation/weather.
 - ◆ How to get help in emergency situations.
- Orientation and mapping to aid travel throughout the site:
 - ◆ Where is it/how does one get there?



A ranger demonstration at Cape Lookout Light Station



Beach at Cape Point

- ◆ When and where are programs/ things to do?
- Opportunity to purchase souvenirs.
- Opportunity to purchase educational materials to extend learning.

Specific Audiences

RECREATIONAL VISITORS. Interpretive services may not be the primary reason for this audience to visit the park. Yet they will still appreciate the park's messages if they encounter them as part of other recreation-based experiences. It is especially important to convey resource management messages (for example, regarding threatened and endangered species) to this audience segment. These visitors want:

- Active, fun, “get wet,” unstructured experiences and adventures that they can enjoy with a minimum of rules.
- To savor the sun, sand, and salt water.
- To catch fish.
- Solitude and room to spread out.
- Experiences that build memories and promote family bonding.
- Photographs of themselves enjoying their experience.
- Informal interpretive services based around contacts with roving rangers or formal evening programs provided at the end of the day.
- A full spectrum of experiences, from very physically active to more restful ones.

HERITAGE TOURISTS. These visitors want to learn about Cape Lookout history and hear its stories. They want:

- Facilitated programs, exhibits, and self-guided tours that address heritage topics and create a context or framework for what they are seeing.
- To learn what life was like on the banks, and how people could live/ survive in that harsh environment.
- To learn what life is like on the banks for the horses, and how they have survived there for hundreds of years.
- Literature on these topics that they can take home with them.
- Information on former Banks communities.
- To visit historical buildings.
- To take photographs.
- Activities that will engage children and family members of all ages.

- To see – and climb – the lighthouse.
- To connect to the lives of their ancestors if they have personal roots in the area.

ECOTOURISTS AND ENVIRON-

MENTALISTS. These visitors focus on the park’s natural beauty and the significance of its natural resources. They want:

- Facilitated programs and guide services to take them to the resources they want to learn about.
- Active, “road less traveled” immersion experiences based on their area of interest.
- To participate in “ecovolunteerism” activities like the January bird count.
- To understand and share resource management messages.

SCHOOL GROUPS (INCLUDING BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS). Teachers face a number of obstacles, including expense, logistics, and the need to keep field trips relevant to school curriculum when planning a field trip to Cape Lookout National Seashore. Although few teachers venture to the seashore with classes entirely on their own, and although the park is just beginning to develop curriculum support guides for teachers, many school groups do visit successfully and learn a great deal.

There is also good evidence that schools will invest significant class time and funding to take advantage of structured educational guide services that have a curriculum focus, such as those currently provided by commercial providers. For example, Carolina Ocean Studies has taken thousands of students

per year to the seashore at a cost of about \$24.00 per student. Many of these schools are from distant counties and have committed to an overnight or multi-day trip to the coast.

Teachers are seeking:

- A choice of topics.
- Hands-on experiences and experiential learning for their students.
- A fun but structured experience that includes directed activities.
- Easy to use, ready-made adjunct materials (kits and curriculum guides) and pre-trip prep materials.
- Ranger-led in-service training sessions.
- Teacher workshops/training on how to use the park.
- Continuing education credits.
- A way to document that the park visits align with curriculum standards.
- Assessment/measurement of effectiveness of park visits.
- Packaged services with guide/facilitator support.

Students are seeking (whether they realize it or not):

- A fun day that allows for self-paced experiential learning.
- To form points of reference that aid future learning.
- Life lessons: such as the consequences of not obeying safety rules, which may include insect stings, sunburn, or other discomforts.
- Self-directed discovery and the opportunity to share what they have learned.

- An introduction to nature.
- To find that one can learn outside of school.
- To hone observational skills.
- To learn critical thinking skills.
- Inspiration.
- To socialize with friends.
- To experience new things, like boat rides (for some).

Issues and Influences

Servicewide and National Influences

The interpretation and education program at Cape Lookout National Seashore must be responsive to agency-wide perspectives, goals, and initiatives identified by the NPS and its national partners as it works to define the long-term goals and priorities that will help move the NPS into the 21st century. Guidance for this is found in the National Parks Second Century Commission Report: Advancing the National Park Idea (2010) and in the Interpretation and Education Renaissance Action Plan (2006).

The interpretive program at Cape Lookout National Seashore must also be responsive to a great many issues and influences that are part of the regional, national, and even global environment in which the park will function. Many of these are addressed as part of the Second Century NPS vision. The following is just a sampling of the types of issues that the park and the NPS might address:

- Global warming and sea level rise.
- Barrier island migration, barrier island development, the high cost

and long-term futility of holding back the sea.

- Storm water runoff from coastal areas and inland, non-point source pollution, and the health of the Back, Core, and Pamlico Sound estuarine system.
- Clean beaches, the dumping of trash, and the accumulation of debris in the world's oceans.
- Barrier islands as a critical habitat for both resident and migratory species, and the need for species protection to have both a national and international reach.
- Sustainability.
- Historical and commemorative events such as the 150th Anniversary of the Cape Lookout Lighthouse in 2009, the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Cape Lookout National Seashore, the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016, and the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War (2011-2015).

Local and Regional Influences

Cape Lookout National Seashore depends on park staff and volunteers as well as external stakeholders to provide input, feedback, and energy in order to make the interpretation and education program successful. Stakeholders, including representatives of partner museums and other interpreting organizations, tourism officials, educators, and local neighbors, have offered the following insights:

- **ACCESS.** Logistics present great challenges in getting people to the resource. The proposal to consolidate

many individual permitted ferries into fewer concession-contracted ferries may help to alleviate some visitor challenges. But even with a new ferry system in place, visitors will need to heed schedules, bring with them all items they will need, and be aware that wind and wave conditions will affect access to the seashore.

- **ACCESS, SCHOOL GROUPS.** School groups and interpretive tour groups have special needs that may not easily fit into a point-to-point ferry service model. School students generally need to stay as a group, receive specific pre-boarding lessons, and require tight scheduling of ferry services. The provision of curriculum-based education by third parties should be encouraged through concession operators, or through alternative authorizations.
- **MESSAGE CONSISTENCY/COORDINATION (INCLUDING FRONT-LINE TOURISM WORKERS).** Many institutions in the area share themes and topics. Consider focus meetings and grant proposals to create subject-matter task forces that will improve message coordination.
- **CROSS-MARKETING.** With so many organizations sharing topics, there is an opportunity to create joint informational kiosks that can direct visitors to the variety of programs, and that can share marketing initiatives through local tourism organizations.
- **AUTHENTICITY/LOCAL PARTICIPATION.** Where practicable, using local people as employees and volunteers in interpretation and education programs

will allow them to share their heritage, as well as provide a deeper regional experience for park visitors.

- **BALANCE/SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.** There is a concern that too much visitation could eventually diminish the experience of the resources that people value the most.
- **EXPANDED OUTREACH.** A recent park program of outreach to school classes has been very well received in the community. There is a need to institutionalize and expand the program, and extend it to multiple platforms.
- **ARTIST'S RETREAT.** The park's rental cabins and the Education Center at the Cape offer an ideal retreat for artists, writers, and musicians seeking to create park-inspired works of art.
- **OVERNIGHT, "LESS STRUCTURED" EXPERIENCES.** Logistical challenges remain, but these kinds of experiences would provide opportunities for a more in-depth understanding of Cape Lookout's issues and themes.



Cape Lookout Light Station Visitor Center facilities

Interpretive Facilities

Visitor Centers

There are three widely separated visitor center/contact stations within the park: the Harkers Island Visitor Center, Cape Lookout Light Station Visitor Center and Keepers' Quarters Museum, and the Portsmouth Theodore and Annie Salter House Visitor Center. Only the Harkers Island Visitor Center can be reached by vehicle. The other two, which span the entire 56-mile seashore, must be reached either by private boat or ferry.

HARKERS ISLAND VISITOR CENTER

This is the main visitor center, located on the eastern end of Harkers Island. It is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily except for Christmas and New Year's Day. The seashore remains open to visitation 24 hours per day, seven days per week, every day of the year.

The visitor center is part of the park's administrative and headquarters building. A former motel that was converted to its present use by the park's maintenance staff in the early 1990s, the visitor center opened in 1993 to house not only the park administrative offices, but also museum storage space, office/work space for the various divisions and field personnel, a small visitor center area, a very small area for book sales, and a 15-seat theater. Up until 2007, exhibits were of the "homemade" variety and varied in topic and appearance according to the interest and skill of the staff member or volunteer who created them.

Since the center's opening a few changes have occurred in usage and appearance. In about 2004, the park museum collection was moved to the Core Sound Waterfowl



**Harkers Island
Visitor Center**



Museum and Heritage Center, and in 2010, the collection was moved to the museum storage facility at Cape Hatteras National Seashore. During the fall of 2006, the visitor center area was renovated to install professionally created exhibits covering the natural and cultural history of the park, to add a 70-seat theater in which to show a new park film, and to expand the sales area. Detailed descriptions of the exhibits and park film are provided in the Interpretive Media section of this document.

Because visitors can access/enter the seashore from multiple ferries, community, and individual access points all the way from Ocracoke to Morehead City, North Carolina, the Harkers Island Visitor Center is often not a primary stop for the majority of park visitors. However, those who do visit are pleased with the services and facilities. Since the 2007 renovation, more visitors are being directed to the visitor center by local business owners, family members, and others as a “must see” during their visit on the coast.

The central component of the visitor center is the information desk, where park staff hand out brochures and provide assistance. The staff answer numerous questions about island access, camping, beach driving, wildlife closures, fishing, sea turtle nesting, wild horses, lighthouse history, the best place to go shelling, where to launch a private boat, and kayaking, among other topics of interest. The staff also answer phones, prepare visitor service-related correspondence, and perform reception duties for the headquarters offices.

It is also important to note that the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center is located next to the Harkers Island Visitor Center. This museum is managed by a private not-for-profit organization, and is a park partner.

Analysis of Future Facilities Needs.

Currently the numbers of daily visitors are adequately handled by one visitor desk employee during the winter weekdays and two employees during winter weekends. The majority of visitors to the visitor center consist of small family groups who generally stay from 30 minutes to about one hour in the building. During the summer months (from May through September), additional staffing is usually available with up to two persons being assigned to work the visitor center operation. The additional traffic generated by potential ticket sales associated with opening of the Cape Lookout Lighthouse for public climbing in 2010, and the addition of the ferry concession operations at the Harkers Island Area, projected in 2013, is expected to significantly increase the number of visitors to the visitor center. The park will likely have to increase coverage of the desk from one to two persons year-round, and may need to increase custodial coverage of the building.

Larger groups (over 30 participants) such as class field trips or other sponsored groups have always presented challenges in the visitor center. The exhibit area becomes very crowded and the interactive exhibits were designed for use by only one or two visitors at a time. Bad weather

days (windy, rainy, uncomfortable temperatures, or any combination of these) may exacerbate the problem.

Although the numbers of large groups of visitors is currently low, the park is developing an education program that will begin to bring such groups more frequently. Future planning should take into consideration that there is currently no space for large groups to assemble, do activities, or eat lunch during bad weather, in ways that do not impact the general visitor.

Facilities for kayakers and visitors returning from the beach may also be needed. The seashore has had problems with kayak groups attempting to use the bathroom facilities at the Harkers Island Visitor Center to rinse off and clean up, with the result that the

bathrooms are left dirty and wet.

A directional sign to the Core Sound Museum and Heritage Center at the visitor center parking lot, and information about what this facility offers at the visitor center, will help inform visitors about the Core Sound Museum.

LIGHT STATION VISITOR CENTER

Located three miles off-shore on the island of South Core Banks near the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, this visitor center can be reached only by boat. It is open seasonally from late March to around Thanksgiving. During the season, it is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is staffed primarily by volunteers, and at least 3 days a week, by an Eastern National clerk. Built in 2005-6 as part of a complex of new buildings and structures on a raised

Cape Lookout National Seashore features spectacular paddling along 112 miles of uninhabited shoreline.





Keepers' Quarters Museum

wooden “plaza,” the visitor center is centrally located for all visitors arriving at the park’s lighthouse area passenger ferry dock. Other buildings sharing the plaza are restroom facilities, and a large shade shelter. The boardwalk from the ferry dock leads to the plaza, so visitors arriving by ferry walk past the visitor center on their way to the beach.

One third of the visitor center is taken up by space for book sales through Eastern National. An information area (desk, brochure rack, bulletin board) and a touch table for identifying shells are also inside. Currently, there is little in the way of exhibits in this building and none are anticipated in the future. The Light Station Visitor Center was constructed to capture more of the visitors to the area, and for improving the Eastern

National book sales area. All of these visitor service functions, as well as bathrooms, were previously located at the Keepers’ Quarters. The Light Station Visitor Center and new bathrooms were needed in anticipation of the installation of new exhibits in the Keepers’ Quarters. It was also constructed to provide for future ticket sales for the lighthouse tower and island tours.

Analysis of Future Needs. Power for the visitor center is provided by a pair of diesel generators, which introduce both engine noise and diesel exhaust smell into the area. The seashore needs to develop a cost effective, environmentally desirable green energy system to provide power for the Light Station area. Alternatively, the seashore needs to evaluate the ramifications of taking full responsibility

for the USCG power cable to utilize a higher level of its capacity.

KEEPERS' QUARTERS MUSEUM

Located on the first floor of the historic lighthouse Keepers' Quarters near the base of the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, this museum can be reached only by boat. It is open seasonally from late March to around Thanksgiving, and is staffed primarily by volunteers. During the season, it is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum contains both graphic and artifact exhibits and shows a shortened version of the park's orientation film. Detailed descriptions of the exhibits and film are provided in the Interpretive Media Section of this document.

The two-story historic Keepers' Quarters was renovated in the early 1990s to provide visitor services on the island. The first floor provided space for rest rooms, an exhibit room, a book sales area, and information desk, as well as an area for the building's utilities. The second floor became a living area for the volunteers who staffed the building during summer. During the 2006 renovations, the rest rooms and book sales were moved to the newly completed plaza, while the utility area was reworked to take up less space. This left the entire first floor available for new exhibits, which were installed in 2007. The second floor remains a living area for the volunteers.

Analysis of Future Needs: Space in the center hallway can be used for extended and/or temporary exhibits. One idea for an extended exhibit would be to hang portraits of keepers from the station. Another idea would be to

interpret the VIP Keeper program and identify the current and possibly past volunteer keepers.

PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE VISITOR CENTER

Located on the first floor of the Theodore and Annie Salter House in the Portsmouth Historic District, this visitor center is the most remote of the three visitor centers in the park, lying almost 40 miles north of Harkers Island. Portsmouth is reachable only by boat, with the easiest access being from Ocracoke across the five miles of open water of Ocracoke Inlet. This visitor center is unstaffed, but volunteers and park staff are available in the village to greet ferries, provide limited tours, answer questions, and assist visitors. The building is open seasonally from March to November on a daily basis from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The rest of the year it is opened only when park staff is in the village.

The visitor center is routinely the first stop for visitors arriving by ferry in the village. It is also the only place in the village with rest rooms. This c. 1900s house was adaptively used as a visitor

Portsmouth Village
Visitor Center



center starting in the 1980s when a district office was established in the building. Limited information via brochure racks and bulletin boards was provided inside. Some historic furnishings from the original owners were left in place. Exhibits were of the “homemade” variety and varied in form and appearance according to the skill of their creator. When the district was abolished in the late 1980s to early 1990s, the area was visited by park staff only sporadically. Finally, the park’s volunteer program was able to place pairs of volunteers in the village throughout the summer. These volunteers staffed the visitor center when the ferry was scheduled to arrive and assisted with the maintenance of the village (mowing, painting, etc.) the rest of the time. During this time, the exhibits continued to be of the “homemade” variety.

In the fall of 2009, new professionally designed exhibits were installed in the Theodore and Annie Salter House Visitor Center, Schoolhouse, Post Office and General Store, and Life-Saving Station. The visitor center now has both graphic and artifact exhibits as well as a historically furnished room. Detailed descriptions of the exhibits are provided in the Interpretive Media Section of this document.

This visitor center is maintained as an unstaffed area. However, pairs of volunteers continue to be stationed in the village throughout the summer and are available to answer visitor questions and provide assistance.

Analysis of Future Needs: The build-

ings and some trails in the village need signs to inform visitors of building features, facility directions, and safety.

Additional Portsmouth Facilities:

School, Portsmouth Post Office/Store, Portsmouth Methodist Church, Portsmouth Life-Saving Station are all open to the public and except for the church, all include new exhibits.

Analysis of Future Needs: Local residents have requested that the park reconstitute a genealogy exhibit and portrait gallery, which might be reinstalled in one of the vacant houses.

Theaters

HARKERS ISLAND THEATER

Completed during the 2006 renovation of the visitor center, this 70-seat theater is equipped to show the park’s high-definition, surround sound, 26-minute orientation film, *Ribbon of Sand*. The theater is equipped with a full-size projection screen, ceiling-mounted LCD projector, HD player, surround-sound speakers and a caption reader board beneath the screen. Assistive listening and audio description are also broadcast within the theater and can be heard through individual receiving units. These units are available for loan at the visitor center desk. Visitors with “t-coil” hearing aids can pick up the broadcast without the need for a separate unit. The park has a French language version of *Ribbon of Sand* donated by the Beaufort Sister Cities organization for the park’s French-speaking visitors and is available on request.

An additional DVD player and VHS player allow for playing other program offerings. If these other programs are captioned, then the reader board will automatically show the captions. Unfortunately, there is no ability to broadcast assistive listening or audio description with any programs other than the orientation film.

The theater is also equipped with computer connections to allow projection of PowerPoint programs and both LAN and internet interconnectivity.

The orientation film, both the long and short versions, can be started remotely from the visitor center desk. All other programs must be started in the theater.

Analysis of Future AV/Theater Needs

at Harkers Island. The theater handles showings of the orientation film to the general visitors and school groups. Use of the theater for meetings, seminars, or training sessions is infrequent, but when it does occur, it impacts the general visitor by canceling the showing of the orientation film. (The park tries to mitigate the impact by providing a DVD player and large screen TV in another area. However, many of the ADA-compliant features are lost with this method.) There is no other large space that can handle the audio-visual component of these other uses. Future planning should consider possible alternatives. In addition, there are no special spaces for handling group visits such as schools.

In addition to the French version, a Spanish version of the *Ribbon of Sand* film should be available for Hispanic visitors.

KEEPERS' QUARTERS MUSEUM THEATER

Completed during the 2006 renovations to the historic Keepers' Quarters, this small (6-10 person) viewing area is set up to be self-operating. A large screen TV is mounted on one wall, and captions are shown on the TV screen. An audio assistance broadcast loop circles the room under the floor allowing visitors with a "t-coil" hearing aid to pick up the broadcast without a separate listening unit. Visitors start the program by pressing a button on the wall. The 17-minute version of the 26-minute film is shown from a video card player installed inside a closet.

This theater does not show any other programs. The TV is not connected to an antenna or external receiver.

EDUCATION CENTER A-V/THEATER

The Education Center will have a small AV system capable of showing the park film and other media. The system will be able to show closed caption films and will have an audio assistance broadcast loop which circles the room under the floor allowing visitors with a "t-coil" hearing aid to pick up the broadcast.

Nature Trails

SOUNDSIDE LOOP TRAIL

Visitors can walk a four-fifths-of-a-mile self-guided nature trail beginning behind the Harkers Island Visitor Center that continues along the eastern shore of Harkers Island, through maritime forest and salt marsh, before returning to the visitor center. The trail is flat but has some rough surfaces and soft soil.

It features a boardwalk and observation deck overlooking Core Sound. Each trail has a trailhead exhibit, and park wayfinding signage directs visitors along the path. Waysides provide in-depth information at a few key points, and small signs keyed to a self-guiding brochure point out other interesting areas. Visitors use the trail in several ways:

- They use the self-guiding brochure, which includes a map of the trail and information keyed to the small signs along the route. This free publication is available in the visitor center and the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center.
- They explore the trail without the brochure, following the trail markers and reading the waysides.
- They use the trail for their own purposes—bird watching, dog walking, as part of their exercise routine (walking, jogging, bike riding)—or as a means of reaching a fishing or clamming area.

The trail is connected by means of two short connector paths to the Willow Pond Loop located behind the nearby Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center. Visitors can choose to walk the Soundside Loop trail or extend their walk to the Willow Pond Loop. Both trails share the same self-guided brochure.

Analysis of Future Need: The nature trail needs to be defined with ground work in front of the visitor center leading back to the visitor center employee parking bridge and/or through signs in front of or in the visitor center.

The nature trail is intended to be fully accessible but the trail surface uses coarse gravel that makes navigation by wheelchairs difficult.

WILLOW POND LOOP TRAIL

This one-third mile self-guided nature trail circles a restored fresh water pond located behind the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center. The trail is flat, but wet conditions may be encountered on some sections. This trail was developed concurrently with the Soundside Loop and also uses small signs keyed to the self-guiding brochure. Visitors walking the trail can choose to walk this loop only or follow the short path to the Soundside Loop and extend their walk. Both trails share the same self-guided brochure, which is available for free in the Museum as well as in the Harkers Island Visitor Center.

Analysis of Future Need: The nature trail is intended to be fully accessible but the trail surface uses coarse gravel, which makes navigation by wheelchairs difficult.

Water Trails

The NPS is a partner in the development of a proposed Saltwater Paddle Trail which runs up the North Atlantic coast from Florida to New England.

Future Facilities

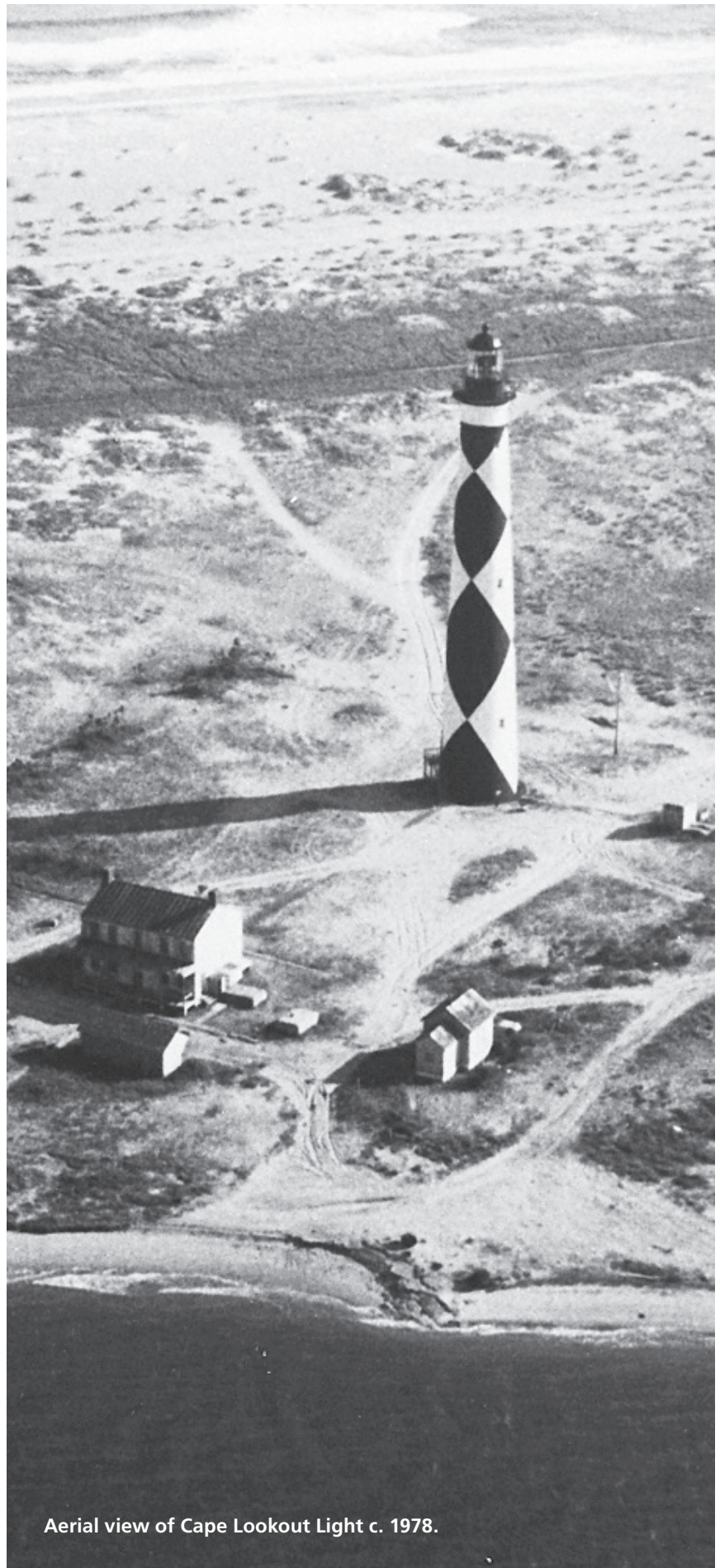
CAPE LOOKOUT LIGHTHOUSE AND LIGHT STATION GROUNDS

Except for the Keepers' Quarters and the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, most

of the remaining features of the Cape Lookout Light Station, including the oil house, coal shed, walks, fence lines, and features associated with other uses, are in ruin. The Cape Lookout Village Cultural Landscape Report (May 9, 2005) provides an inventory and prescription for stabilization and restoration of certain historic features. Restoration of the Light Station grounds, delineated by the fence line, would aid in interpreting and protecting the historical and archeological features of this important landscape.

Funding was received in FY 2010 to make the necessary safety and historic preservation upgrades to the historic lighthouse (stairs, railings, and gallery) so that it could be opened to the public. Construction was completed in June and the lighthouse opened for regular public climbing on July 15, 2010. Initial plans are to have the tower open to the public from mid-May to mid-September. Climbing access will be managed through ticket sales, and visitors will be assigned specific climbing times. Up to ten visitors will be allowed entry every 15 minutes.

The limit on the number of visitors entering the tower, and recommendations on how to manage visitor use in the tower, are contained in an engineering study that evaluated the historic conditions inside the lighthouse with regard to life safety concerns. Completed in 1859, the Cape Lookout Lighthouse does not have as large an interior diameter as the three other tower lighthouses completed later. The triangular steps and small landings of the main staircase, along with the narrow ladder and hatchways



Aerial view of Cape Lookout Light c. 1978.

Cabins at the
Education Center



that provide access to the watch room and gallery, must be taken into account when allowing visitors to enter the tower.

In FY 2010 the lighthouse operated at 95% capacity on fair weather summer days and on fall Saturdays. Even with a drop in climbing on fall weekdays, the season was booked at 75% of overall capacity (open three days per week with reservations available four days per week). With such high visitor demand and such limited capacity, it is unlikely that group climbing requests can be accommodated without displacing regular park visitors (except for off-season curriculum-based visits by county elementary and other nearby schools).

For efficiency, if regular visitor demand increases, extending the length of the climbing day should be explored before additional climbing days are added.

Analysis of Future Needs: The grounds are rich with artifacts relating to the 1812 Cape Lookout Lighthouse, the first 1812 Keepers' Quarters, fence lines, building sites, the foundation

and cistern of the 1907 Keeper's Quarters, and artifacts from the US Weather Service and the US Signal Service. Based on the *Cape Lookout Village Cultural Landscape Report* (May 9, 2005), staff should consider alternative treatments for management, restoration, and interpretation of the light station grounds, and prepare funding requests for high priority projects that identify and stabilize site features, restore important site characteristics, and interpret artifacts relating to the continuity of historic uses of the site.

The *Cape Village Historic Structure Re-use Implementation Plan/EA* recommends that the 1907 Keeper's Quarters be relocated to its original location at the Cape Lookout Light Station.

EDUCATION CENTER

The historic structures of the Les and Sally Moore store and cabins within the Cape Village Historic District were most recently the home of the Cape Lookout Environmental Education Center (CLEEC), a residential environmental education center for youth, operated by a private not-for-profit organization, headquartered in Greensboro, North Carolina. The center closed in 2006, when the center director left the region.

In 2011 renovation of these facilities into a code compliant residential education center was nearly complete. Center facilities include a main building that provides bunk space for up to 20 people and a meeting area with audio-visual capabilities, a separate building that will house a

kitchen/dining hall, and three additional cabins that could provide overnight accommodations for center staff and possibly a resident Artist in the Park, a storage shed, and a dock that is shared with NPS staff.

Challenges to completing this project include providing electricity, back-up power, and other utilities that are essential for operation of building safety features, such as a fire suppression system. The center dock and immediate building are designed to be accessible.

Multiple organizations have voiced an interest in using and/or leasing the facilities. Because of the broad interest in the center, the NPS will review appropriate models for operation of environmental education centers and will solicit public and partner input into how the center might operate. A number of principles are important to consider with respect to the operation and management of the center:

- A residential education program will be the primary focus of the center.
- The center should be available year round for the broadest range of appropriate uses, and accordingly, the NPS does not plan to lease the center facilities exclusively to one organization.
- Using professional education staff, the NPS will take an active role in the development, review, and execution of the education program and the coordination of center partnerships.

- The NPS will seek multiple partners who will be responsible for the development and execution of the educational program and the day-to-day operation of center facilities.
- The center should be financially sustainable through programmatic fees and a funds development program managed by the partners on behalf of the center and the NPS.
- The NPS should retain some level of oversight/control of the center facilities.

CAPE VILLAGE STRUCTURES

In a court settlement over litigation concerning the future of the Cape Lookout Village Historic District, the NPS agreed to perform planning for the district. The resulting Cape Village Historic Structure Re-Use Implementation Plan proposed using 8-10 of the structures for overnight cabin lodging in order to provide many visitors with an opportunity to experience a recreational cabin stay at the historic district (instead of again leasing the structures to just a few individuals.) The plan also recommended that a number of the structures within the historic district



U.S. Coast Guard
Station, Cape Village

Cemetery at Portsmouth Village

be used for education, and for interpreting the significant maritime legacy of the park.

The implementation plan noted that the NPS will need to fund and complete infrastructure work, including provision of potable water, septic, and power to and within the village before the plan can be fully implemented. This infrastructure work is ongoing: a deep well was installed at the lighthouse in 2006, and a potable water line was installed to the Education Center in 2008. In 2010 the U.S. Coast Guard agreed to transfer the underwater power line to the NPS, and to solarize the lighthouse. It is anticipated that a power line to the Education Center will be completed in 2011.

Recommendations of the *Cape Village Historic Structure Re-Use Implementation Plan* address nationally significant historic structures including the 1890s Life-Saving Station, the Life-Saving Station Boathouse, the 1907 Cape Lookout Lighthouse Keepers' Quarters, the U.S. Coast Guard Station, and a number of locally significant cabins, as follows:

- **Life-Saving Station.** The station should be relocated to its second site next to the U.S. Coast Guard Station. The structure should be restored to its original configuration; the first floor of the station interior should be restored; and exhibits should be developed to interpret the Life-Saving Service, making the station the main interpretive focus for Cape Village. The Station is in need of extensive restoration.



- **Life-Saving Station Boathouse.**

The boathouse should be relocated to its original site near the U.S. Coast Guard Station and the exterior and interior of the boat house should be restored.

- **1907 Keeper's Quarters.** The 1907 Keeper's Quarters should be relocated to its original site near the Cape Lookout Lighthouse.

PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The historic district encompasses numerous historic structures and cemeteries, of which six structures are open to the public. Currently, five structures are leased to individuals under a 1990s-era Historic Leasing Program; leases for these structures will expire between 2010 and 2013. Because the authority for leasing has changed significantly, and the development of adequate sanitary facilities is not only challenging in the district, but is also further complicated by sea level rise, future leasing may not be desirable or feasible. In either event, the NPS will decide how to manage

these leased structures (when they become available) and others in the Portsmouth Village Historic District, when the park revises its General Management Plan.

In 2010 the Friends of Portsmouth Island requested and received authorization to use the Henry Pigott House and its grounds to manage as a furnished historic house and site.

Interpretive Media

ORIENTATION FILM

The audio-visual program *Ribbon of Sand* was debuted in January 2007 at the grand opening of the newly renovated Harkers Island Visitor Center. The full version is 26 minutes long and is shown in the Harkers Island Visitor Center Theater. A shorter, 17-minute version is shown in the Keepers' Quarters Museum Theater, but may also be shown in the theater on Harkers Island.

The award-winning film, narrated by actress Meryl Streep, has toured the nation and the world in a variety of film festivals and is routinely shown on National Public Television stations nationwide.

Indoor Exhibits

HARKERS ISLAND VISITOR CENTER

All exhibits in the visitor center were installed in 2006-7. The exhibits introduce the visitor to the seashore, providing a taste of what there is to see and do out on the islands, as well as a little natural history on dunes and sea oats, nesting birds and sea turtles, and the

geological forces at play in creating and maintaining island features. Cultural history is explored with exhibits on the lighthouse, the village of Portsmouth, and the U.S. Life-Saving Service/U.S. Coast Guard. However, due to the small size of the exhibit area, the exhibits only skim the surface; in-depth development of any given theme or topic is not possible at this time.

As far as possible, the exhibits were made interactive by including touchable maps, models, and objects. Some exhibits use listening wands or small video players. A Discovery Room,



Harkers Island Visitor Center exhibits

Keepers' Quarters
Museum exhibits



designed specifically for younger visitors, was placed in what had been the 15-seat theater area. The space includes a touch table containing shells, bones, drift seeds, and other beach finds, a mural with lift panels highlighting the barrier island environment, a magnetic habitat game, and a computer program that allows visitors to choose a bird or animal and hear what sound it makes.

A place for temporary, rotating, or seasonal exhibits was also created as part of the exhibit installation. A glass-fronted exhibit case allows for the display of selected objects from the park's museum collection. A carpeted flat panel allows for tempo-

rary exhibits on a variety of subjects. These are created by park staff and highlight such topics as local black history during Black History Month, National Park Week and other park-related celebrations, an old fashioned Outer Banks Christmas, and other short term topics.

Analysis of Future Exhibit Needs at the Harkers Island Visitor Center:

The scope of the exhibits installed in 2007 was limited by the lack of floor and lobby space at the Harkers Island Visitor Center. Many visitors and school groups who come to the park with only limited time do not take a ferry to the barrier islands of the seashore. These visitors would benefit

from expanded exhibits that would cover the range of interpretive themes in greater detail. The amount of public space at the visitor center would need to be significantly increased to accommodate such exhibits.

Additional carpeted bulletin panels should be added to the hallway outside the resource management office doors to allow for the posting of resource management information and seasonal updates. Posters and notices regarding sea turtles, horse adoptions and herd updates, and similar material are being added to the temporary exhibits, turning them from “exhibits” with a single theme into “bulletin boards” of disparate posted topics. Currently, there is no other place for such information to be easily posted and made available to the visitor. Additional carpeted panels would also help absorb the echo that occurs in the hallway.

With the consolidation of ferries in Harkers Island boat basin and the possible sale of activity-related tickets at Harkers Island, there will be a need for additional information signs and systems letting visitors know the status and fees for these services.

The Discovery Room children’s exhibit could be expanded within the existing space to include, for example, a creature puppet exhibit, and to enhance the magnetic creature activity.

KEEPERS’ QUARTERS MUSEUM

The exhibits in the Keepers’ Quarters Museum, installed in 2007, focus primarily on the lighthouse, its history, operation, the keepers, and

their families. Interactive elements were introduced by having a weighted block that could be (safely) lifted to discover what one of the keeper’s jobs was like, and a small video screen, push-button activated, which shows how a Fresnel lens works.

A secondary exhibit focuses on the U.S. Life-Saving Service and its history, operation, and methods. This exhibit highlights a rescue that resulted in the entire Cape Lookout Life-Saving Station crew receiving a gold lifesaving medal.

Separated from the main exhibit area is a small 6-10 person theater and in the next room, a set of “introduction to the park” panels that have been repurposed from the exhibits at Harkers Island. Overhead in this room is a 360-degree view from the top of the lighthouse. The park introductory material is included in this museum, as most visitors arrive at the lighthouse without ever seeing Harkers Island.

Analysis of Future Exhibit Needs at the Keepers’ Quarters Museum: The first-floor hallway of the museum would provide a suitable location for an exhibit on the keepers of the Cape Lookout Light Station. This exhibit could include lists of keepers that would tie to families from the local community whose descendents served at the light station, photos and oral history.

If the 1907 Keepers’ Quarters is moved back to the Cape Lookout Light Station, this structure could be used to provide a furnished exhibit on the first floor and quarters for a second set of volunteers on the second floor.



Interior, Portsmouth School

PORTSMOUTH VISITOR CENTER

The Theodore & Annie Salter House Visitor Center exhibits, installed in 2009, tell the history of the village from its establishment in 1753, to its rise as a port town in the early 1800s, and the changes that caused its decline and evolution into a fishing village. Although the history of the U.S. Life-Saving Service is introduced here, this topic is left to the exhibits in the Life-Saving Station for more complete development. A small subset of the exhibits includes repurposed panels from exhibits on Harkers Island that introduce the park as a whole. Most visitors to Portsmouth come from Ocracoke Island, part of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, and know very little about the extent of Cape Lookout National Seashore.

Since electricity is not available at most Portsmouth structures, all lighting is ambient light from the windows, and there are no audio-video components to the exhibits.

PORTSMOUTH POST OFFICE/ GENERAL STORE

This exhibit, completed in 2009, makes use of historic furnishings—some original to the building—as well as modern exhibit panels and reproduction materials, to tell of the role the Post Office and general store played in the lives of the villagers.

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL

Within the one-room school house dating from the 1920s, exhibits completed in 2009 partially furnish the space as a school room using

reproduction and antique desks and other artifacts. Panel exhibits present information on Portsmouth schools throughout the village's history.

PORTSMOUTH CHURCH

The church is a historically furnished space with original and introduced furnishings. It includes the pews, pulpit, reed pump organ, and other furnishings that are original to the church. The one addition is the piano, which came from the Jesse and Lillian Babb House in the 1980s through the will of their daughter. There are also several monument-style plaques on the wall behind the pulpit. The church did not receive any new exhibits from the 2009 exhibit plan because: 1) the church is furnished with mostly original furnishings, 2) the use of exhibits in this structure was considered intrusive to its historic character, and 3) exhibits would conflict with the religious significance of the church.

PORTSMOUTH LIFE-SAVING STATION

Located at the opposite end of the village from the visitor center, the Portsmouth Life-Saving Station is the first stop for visitors arriving from the beach. The Life-Saving Station was rehabbed after being damaged by flood waters from Hurricane Isabel in 2003. The exhibits at the station, which were installed in 2009, are primarily devoted to telling the story of the U.S. Life-Saving Service, its history and operation, with an emphasis on the history of the men stationed at Portsmouth and the rescues they performed. Artifacts,



Portsmouth Life-Saving Station

both historic and reproduction, are included in the exhibits. One room, the crew's quarters on the second floor, is historically furnished using reproduction items that reflect the 1910 time period. Construction of a working replica of a 26-foot Monomoy surf boat, a replica surf boat carriage, and a replica beach apparatus cart have been completed and will be installed in 2011.

Since visitors arriving from Ocracoke may enter Portsmouth from either the Haulover Dock or from the ocean beach near the Life-Saving Station (usually arriving from the south, via Long Point), the exhibits in one room of the station break away from the main theme. Here the park introductory/orientation exhibits from the visitor center are repeated, and a brief introduction to the village itself is provided. The purpose of the park orientation exhibits is to provide identification of the village as part of Cape Lookout National Seashore.

PORTSMOUTH HENRY PIGOTT HOUSE

The Friends of Portsmouth Island requested, and were authorized in 2010, to take responsibility for rehabilitation of the Pigott House, and plan to open the house to the public as a furnished house exhibit and site depicting Henry Pigott's home. Henry Pigott was African-American and the last male resident to live at Portsmouth. There are currently no exhibits associated with the house.

Analysis of Future Exhibit Needs at the Pigott House: Although the Friends of Portsmouth Island will



Wayside exhibit, Cape Lookout Light

have primary responsibility for rehabilitation and management of the house, the NPS should support their effort by funding a Historic Structures Report (\$75,000) and a Historic Furnishings Plan (\$20,000) for the Pigott house as soon as possible. Those plans will form the foundation for what the Friends plan to do. Signs may be needed as well to direct visitors to the house and a wayside exhibit may be helpful for when the house is closed.

Wayside Exhibits

As of 2010 there are ninety four (94) wayside exhibits installed throughout the park and at former concession ferry departure points. These exhibits were installed in three phases from 2006–2008 and are a variety of sizes, from large upright 36" x 48" three-in-line information/orientation panels at ferry departure and arrival points to standard cantilevered 24" x 36" interpretive waysides and small trailside signs used to identify the historic homes in Portsmouth Village. Other than at ferry departure/landing points, the wayside exhibits are clustered in the Portsmouth Village Historic District; near the Light Station Visitor Center; the Cape Lookout Lighthouse; along the boardwalk to the beach; in Cape Lookout Village Historic District; and along the nature trails on Harkers Island.

The park orientation waysides established at park departure and arrival points are intended to identify or link each area as a part of Cape Lookout National Seashore. Each set is generally composed of three 36" by 48" upright panels: a park orientation

panel, an area introduction and orientation panel or interpretive panel, and a safety panel.

Analysis of Future Wayside Needs:

Additional park orientation wayside sets are needed for the new ferry departure sites, including Ocracoke, Atlantic, Davis, and particularly Beaufort/Morehead City, and new ferry arrival areas (West end of Shackleford Banks, and the Education Center.) Additional interpretive waysides are planned for the Harkers Island area, including interpretive information on Harkers Island shoreline protection, the water gardens, and the anchor. Waysides are also planned at the Light Station area and may be useful at the Henry Pigott house in Portsmouth Village.

Publications

UNIGRID BROCHURE

The current park brochure is focused on visitor orientation. It provides a description of the island environments, driving directions, ferry information, tips about visiting, safety information, and a park map.

Analysis of Future Need: A new park brochure is needed to update and add content to the existing brochure. The new brochure should include revisions, such as inclusion of the National Scenic Byway and the east coast kayak trail that is being planned (NPS SER RTCA program).

SITE BULLETINS

The interpretive staff designs, writes, and publishes site bulletins on a variety of park-related topics. These free

informational and interpretive materials are either mailed to students and the general public or may be picked up in the various visitor centers throughout the park. Electronic versions of these publications are provided on the park's website for download.

The present site bulletins cover a wide range of natural history, cultural, educational, safety, and recreational topics that are specific to Cape Lookout National Seashore. Currently, site bulletins are available on:

Cultural History: *Beacons of the Coast, Henry Pigott, Light Keepers, Cape Lookout Lighthouse, Portsmouth Village*

Natural History: *Shackleford Horses, Biting Insects of the Seashore, Sea Turtles, Keep Wildlife Wild, Bird Checklist*

Recreational Guides: *Beach Safety, Beach Camping, Beach Driving, Personal Watercraft (PWC) Use, All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Use, Hunting*

Educational Guides: *Traveling Trunks, Junior Ranger Adventures Rack Card, Web Rangers Rack Card, and Junior Ranger Newspaper*

The staff will continue to create new site bulletins on various topics and update old ones as the need arises. These will continue to be made available to visitors through a variety of venues including the visitor centers, the park's website, and new technology such as e-readers.

Analysis of Future Need: As is the case with writing for the park web site, staff time to write and update the content of site bulletins is at a premium. Due to the need for staff subject matter expertise and the need for advanced

interpretive writing skills, it is helpful (if not essential) to have staff hired for longer-term positions, and that they are experienced and graded high enough to be able to perform competently with more complex writing tasks

Site bulletins developed for kids by kids are an important potential result of participation of school children in a park outreach program.

Another consideration is the need to periodically upgrade the desktop publishing program(s) needed to produce and print these publications. Keeping pace with the supported versions of the publishing programs is critical to producing a good product that can be printed easily. Additional costs are involved in procuring site licenses for multiple computers, and in training staff in the use of these programs, either through classes at the local community college or an NPS publications training session.

PARK NEWSPAPER

The park has published a park newspaper for the past nine years. Each year, the newspaper has a different central theme or focus with most of the articles reflecting that theme. So far the paper has focused on: history, geologic forces, storms and hurricanes, recreation, resource management, park planning, cabin lodging, Portsmouth Village, and the Lighthouse 150th anniversary. While the park uses a contractor to design, edit, and format the newspaper, park staff decides on each year's focus, writes, selects, and edits the final product before it goes to print.

The paper has proven very popular as it puts all the park information (map, list of ferries and their phone numbers,

cabin rental information, interpretive program listings, etc.) in one easily carried publication.

Analysis of Future Need: As with the web site and other media efforts, it is increasingly essential to have staff with graphic arts background and experience on board at the park.

There is a need for image management programs and staff time to maintain image libraries. Additional current images are needed of sufficient resolution and size to be used in the newspaper and in other publications. Front-page quality images are especially lacking in the current digital image files. The park needs to encourage all staff to take photos for publication, and to explore other avenues of expanding the park-owned, copyright-free collection of images.

The park needs to support a systematic distribution of the newspaper to local venues; designating a staff member—seasonal, intern, volunteer, etc.—to be responsible for newspaper deliveries, even if only once a month, will help in getting this publication used more effectively.

WEBSITE

The park's official website is hosted on Department of Interior (DOI) servers and is maintained through an NPS Content Management System (CMS). The CMS makes updating pages and the posting of new content easier as it automates the formatting of pages in HTML code. Although some control over the page is lost

when staff members do not write the code themselves, this is offset by allowing less technically-minded staff to become authors.

Of the nine standard NPS website sections available, the park has activated and provided content for seven: Plan Your Visit, Nature and Science, For Teachers, For Kids, News, Management, and Support Your Park. During the 2009 calendar year, the top five web pages (the ones looked at the most) were the park's home page, and, under the Plan Your Visit section, the lodging, fees and reservations, ferry listing, and things2know [before you come] pages. Statistics indicate that the park's homepage was visited over 41,000 times. More than 20,000 of those visitors to the homepage went on to look at other website pages.

During the mass web content transfer to the latest CMS system, the park decided not to transfer numerous (over 50) pages related to natural and cultural resources, as this content was considered outdated and in need of a serious second look and re-write.

Analysis of Future Need: The website requires highly qualified staff, with interpretive background, knowledge of the park's themes, natural and cultural history, graphic arts expertise, excellent writing ability, and time to upgrade and keep it current.

For some pages, an annual check for correct content before the start of the new season (fees, start dates, etc.) is sufficient. Information on other pages, such as wildlife closures,

requires more frequent monitoring and updates. New content needs to be developed and posted. For instance, at this writing, current and historical information on the Cape Lookout Lighthouse and Portsmouth Village has yet to be posted. Other sections need to be more fully developed in order to meet a variety of needs.

A large backlog of content development work remains to be done, including revision and re-posting of the above-cited natural and cultural resource pages, and the content related to the park's newly developed curriculum materials. The kids' page, by kids for kids, has been completed but a link to it needs to be developed.

COOPERATING ASSOCIATION SALES PUBLICATIONS

Eastern National partners with the NPS to provide sales of educational materials at Cape Lookout National Seashore. Based upon an authorized scope of sales, Eastern National provides a variety of themed publications, educational materials, snacks, and bottled water for sale to the visiting public at two sales areas: the main park outlet at the Harkers Island Visitor Center, and a seasonal outlet at the Light Station Visitor Center. The sales inventory provides a chance for interested visitors to obtain more detailed or additional information about the local or natural history of the area. Children's books and materials on the park's themes are very difficult to find, especially away from the park. Teachers, parents, and grandparents

are delighted to discover what the sales areas carry, some making return trips specifically to purchase birthday and Christmas presents.

Eastern National provides a part-time store manager, a part-time (2-3 days per week) clerk for ordering, receiving, and bookkeeping and a part-time staff member for operating the Light Station Visitor Center Eastern sales outlet (3 days per week in the summer.) Sales at the combined stores are over \$100,000 per year. Eastern National supports the publication of booklets for the park and donates approximately \$6,500 per year to the park interpretation and education programs.

Park Library

The park has a small reference, document, and map library that is located at the Harkers Island park headquarters to serve park staff. In addition, the park has an electronic document library on the park's network.

Analysis of Future Need: Staffing is needed to manage and maintain the library, film and digital photo collection, and the electronic document files.

Personal Services

Staffing support for the interpretive program has varied significantly over time. Overall management of the program has been assigned to a shared position (and often a secondary role.) In the recent past (prior to 2007), the division was managed by a Chief Ranger, GS-12, that also had responsibility for the Visitor Protection division and other management functions such as concessions and planning. At the field level, the interpretive program has had to deal with a turnstile of temporary, STEP, and seasonal staff, many of whom were not oriented towards an interpretive career. As a result, the interpretive division has struggled to attain the capacity needed to mount a full interpretation program, and to be responsive to new program challenges, and regional and NPS goals/objectives. The addition of lighthouse operations, fee collection, a residential education center, management of an ORV education program, and a new focus on educational outreach will all require sustained additional staffing support, in addition to the cadre of volunteers.

The current park organizational chart indicates that the Interpretive Division will be managed by a dedicated Chief of Interpretation, GS-11. Having a dedicated manager who will focus more exclusively on the interpretation and education program is an important first step to developing the capacity of the park's interpretive program.

The Chief of Interpretation works

closely with the park Volunteer Coordinator and supervises the work of one GS-9 permanent Interpreter, and a number of seasonal, temporary, intern, and volunteer positions as follows:

Interpretation and Visitor Services Staffing—By Funded Position and Grade

Depending on the availability of base and other funding, this plan anticipates that the park will fund the following Interpretation positions, except as noted for the Acting Chief of Interpretation.

These core positions are needed to cover basic program management, supervision, coverage for the Harkers Island Visitor Center, and Cape Lookout Lighthouse climbing operations (made possible, in 2010, through funding provided by Secretary of the Interior and North Carolina Senator Kay Hagen). These positions are funded through ONPS sources and may be supplemented by fee revenue from lighthouse climbing fees.

- **Chief of Interpretation**, GS-0025-11 (Permanent Full Time; 1 position; 1.00 FTE). Performs long-range and short-range interpretive planning, provides overall program direction, establishes and manages multiple partnerships to enhance interpretive, education, outreach, and park programs, works directly with interpretation, education, and (through a Volunteer Coordinator) to provide visitor services for the public, manages budgets, seeks external funding, and manages grants. (Note: in FY 2008-2011, the

Chief of Interpretation's duties and responsibilities were performed on an acting basis by the Management Assistant, GS-0025-12.)

- **Park Ranger, GS-0025-9** (Permanent Full Time; 1 position; 1.00 FTE). Performs as the lead/field interpretation ranger, implements and supervises execution of the day-to-day, front line interpretive program (particularly Visitor Center desk and lighthouse operations), assists with long-range and short-range interpretive planning, is the fee supervisor, develops new interpretive programs, manages park publications and electronic media, and performs annual seasonal and other interpretive training.

- **Park Guide, GS-0025/0090-4/5** (Seasonal, Temporary or STEP; 2-3 positions/12 months, 1.8 FTE). (One person per day on weekdays, and two persons on weekends.) Performs visitor desk coverage at the Harkers Island Visitor Center, operates an Eastern National bookstore, answers questions, performs reception and phone duties, provides either independently researched or scripted interpretive programs, assists with events, school programs and community outreach, prepares correspondence, compiles interpretive stats, and assists with a variety of interpretive work, such as interpretive writing, and website maintenance.

Analysis of Future Need: Optimal summer coverage at the Harkers Island Visitor Center would be two persons, Sunday through Saturday, once a consolidated concession

ferry is operating from the Harkers Island boat basin; the second position would provide breaks (instead of administrative personnel), help solve issues, perform roving interpretation, and cover for employee absences either at Harkers Island or at the Cape. To maintain continuity for the Youth Mentoring Program, started with grant funding in FY 2010, one position at the visitor center may be slated for a youth intern (STEP).

The Harkers Island Visitor Center position has lacked continuity; this is primarily a result of managing the position as a STEP or temporary Park Guide position at the GS-4 grade level. The position provided significant advantages and higher productivity only in the rare occasions when it was filled, long-term, by more talented and higher-graded staff.

- **Park Guide/Visitor Use Assistant, GS-0025-4** (Seasonal, Temporary, or STEP; five (5) part-time positions; 4-6 months, April/May through September; 3.0 FTE). Implements lighthouse climbing operations including: taking reservations (1 position, 4 days per week), collecting fees and preparing shift reports (1 position, 3 days per week), tower operations (3 positions—based on recommendations in the lighthouse engineering report on carrying capacity, 3 days per week), answers routine questions, provides scripted safety talks and scripted interpretive programs, and performs roving resource-based interpretation and visitor center coverage.

Analysis of Future Need: In FY 2010 the lighthouse operated at 95% capacity on fair weather summer days and on fall Saturdays. Even with a sharp drop in climbing on fall weekdays, the season was booked at 75% of overall capacity (open 3 days per week with reservations available 4 days per week).

If regular visitor demand increases, the park could consider extending the length of the climbing day or add additional climbing days.

There is a need to address how the park will handle group climbing requests. The park anticipates receiving group climbing requests from both organizations and schools. With such high summer visitor demand and such limited capacity, it is unlikely that group climbing requests can be easily accommodated without displacing regular park visitors. To facilitate group climbing, the park will likely have to consider additional days or an expanded climbing season.

- **Park Ranger, Teacher-Ranger-Teacher**, equivalent to GS-0025-5 (1-2 positions; 6-8 weeks; \$3,500 per position). Plans and presents a wide range of interpretive programs within the park, performs roving interpretation, visitor center duties, lighthouse climbing operations, is exposed to and assists with a wide variety of park operational programs, and presents education programs in their schools' classrooms during National Park Week.

In addition, in order to move forward on NPS Director Jarvis'

goal of providing education outreach, this park anticipates that the following additional positions (in priority order) will be identified for funding:

- **Park Ranger**, GS-0025-7 (Seasonal, or Temporary; 1 position for six months, December through May/June; 0.5 FTE). Develops and presents an Education Outreach program to schools, develops liaison with schools, develops teacher workshops and curriculum guide materials, and coordinates Teacher-Ranger-Teacher, Mentorship/Intern, college intern, and other grant programs.

Analysis of Future Need: Initial school outreach program success was a result of efforts by an individual with skills considerably higher than warranted by the GS-5 salary that was allocated in 2010. Continued development of the program is needed that would require staffing at the GS-7 or higher level. Positive contacts made in 2010 indicate that demand for school outreach programs could easily increase, and park management should consider increasing the number of staff available to perform the outreach programs.

- **Park Ranger**, GS-0025-5 (Seasonal, Temporary or STEP; 1 position from May through October 15; 0.5 FTE). Plans and presents a wide range of interpretive programs within the park including preparation of electronic and new media, performs roving interpretation, and supplements visitor center duties and lighthouse climbing operations as needed.

Depending on continued grant funding (initially received in FY 2010), or when feasible in lieu of part of the GS-5 Harkers Island (Roving) Position above, a diversity mentorship position may be identified, as follows:

- **High School Mentorship Intern,** Visitor Use Assistant, GS-0303-3 (Seasonal, Temporary or STEP; 1 position for 6-8 weeks). As an entry level position under direct/close supervision: performs lighthouse tower operations, visitor desk coverage at the Harkers Island Visitor Center, operates an Eastern National bookstore, answers questions, and performs general reception duties.

Interpretation and Visitor Services Staffing—Future Facilities and Programs

The following positions and functions may be needed in future years, dependent on program direction and available funding:

EDUCATION OUTREACH

Analysis of Future Need: Initial school outreach program success was a result of efforts by an individual with skills considerably higher than that warranted by the GS-5 salary that was allocated in 2010. Continued development of the program is needed, which would require appropriately graded staff at the GS-7 level, or above. Positive contacts made in 2010 indicate that demand for school outreach programs could easily increase, and park management should consider increasing the number of staff available to perform the outreach programs.

EDUCATION CENTER MANAGEMENT

- **Analysis of Future Need:** The Education Center will be operational mainly in spring/summer/fall, March 15 to November 15, but might operate year round. Once the center becomes operational, staffing will be needed for the following types of tasks: to develop and manage partnerships, to design the environmental program, to market the program, to prepare center brochures and websites, to schedule groups, to check groups in and out and collect fees, to account for fees, to present and facilitate all aspects the educational program, to facilitate use of center facilities, and to maintain the center. This work will be needed in the months when the center is operational, and additional time is needed during the year in order to market, schedule, and plan center programs.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) LITIGATION AND ORV PLAN EDUCATION

- **Analysis of Future Need:** In FY 2011 the NPS had not yet completed the Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan. The initial draft of the ORV Management Plan/EIS identified a significant workload for education and identified the need for a GS-9 Park Ranger (Visual Information/Media Specialist) position that will be responsible for developing ORV publications, website, education materials, outreach, and ORV education programs.

Interpretation and Visitor Services Staffing—Unpaid/Volunteer Positions

- The park receives invaluable visitor services and interpretation assistance through the volunteer program. In FY 2010 volunteers provided over 25,000 hours of volunteer service to the park, valued at over \$500,000. Virtually all of the visitor services on the islands are performed by volunteers. Without volunteers, the operations at the Light Station Visitor Center, Keepers' Quarters Museum, and Portsmouth Village would have to be eliminated. Volunteers help support the lodging operations at the Long Point and Great Island cabin areas, and provide winter caretakers at the Cape Village historic district and support for all park operations.
- The volunteer program is supervised by a Volunteer Coordinator (who is also a volunteer) operating under the direction of the Superintendent.
- To operate successfully, the volunteer program needs and receives support from all park operations, including direct support (such as logistics/transportation, maintenance of on-island and mainland housing, and guidance, training and coaching from benefiting operations), and indirect support (such as budget and administration.) Volunteers provide the following Visitor Services/ Interpretation support:
 - **Volunteer Coordinator, Equivalent to Park Ranger, GS-0025-11 (VIP;** 9-12 months; 1 position; 0.8 FTE) Manages the parkwide volunteer program including deploying ten or more VIPs at a time, for 3- to 6-week stints at the Harkers Island Visitor Center, Cape Village Historic District, Light Station Visitor Center, Portsmouth Village, the Long Point and Great Island lodging areas, and other areas of the park.
 - **Light Station Visitor Center, Equivalent to Park Guide, GS-0090-4/5 (VIP; mid-March to mid-November/6-8 months; 2 positions; 1.00 – 1.30 FTE)** Resides at the park. Provides the primary staffing for this highly visited historical site, ferry arrival area and transportation hub for South Core Banks. Provides visitor center operations, Eastern National bookstore operations, informal interpretation, and scripted interpretive programs.
 - **Keepers' Quarters Museum, Equivalent to Park Guide, GS-0090-4/5 (VIP; mid-March to mid-November/6-8 months; 2 positions; 1.00 – 1.30 FTE)** Resides at the park. Provides the only staffing for the Keepers' Quarters museum, and essential coverage for the lighthouse tower climbing operation (by providing 3 hours of breaks for tower staff.) Performs visitor contact, roving interpretation, lighthouse climbing support, and informal interpretation, and presents scripted interpretive programs.
 - **Portsmouth Village, Equivalent to Park Ranger, GS-0025-5 (VIP; mid-April to October/6-8 months;**

2 positions; 1.00 – 1.30 FTE) Resides at the park. Provides the primary visitor services staffing at this remote, nationally significant historic district. Performs visitor contact, roving interpretation, interpretive tours (40%), light maintenance (40%), and site security and visitor safety (20%).

- **Great Island and Long Point Cabin Camps, Equivalent to Park Guide, GS-0090-4/5 (VIP; mid-March to June and September to December/6-8 months; 2 positions; 1.00 – 1.30 FTE)** Resides at the park. Performs light maintenance (50%), on and off vehicle counts (25%), and site security and visitor safety (25%).

- **Harkers Island Visitor Center, Equivalent to Park Guide GS-4/5 to Park Ranger (GS-0025-5/7/9)** May reside at the park VIP Quarters or use the trailer pad at Harkers Island. It is anticipated that VIPs will continue to provide intermittent assistance for visitor desk and special projects at the Harkers Island Visitor Center, generally during the fall, winter, and spring. When VIPs are available, paid visitor center staff is able to perform other high priority tasks such as supplemental education outreach and a long list of interpretive project work. While the volunteers perform their duties as unpaid staff, the interpretation division relies on ONPS funding for support of the VIPs in the form of logistics (transportation to and from the islands and on the islands) and housing (both on the islands and at Harkers Island.)



Personnel Service Programs

Programs For The General Public

Cape Lookout National Seashore offers a variety of walks, talks, and demonstrations during the peak visitation period of Memorial Day to Labor Day. These programs are offered on a daily/weekly/monthly basis during the summer months of June, July, and August, and—depending on the availability of interpretive staff—on a few weekends during the spring and fall. Many of these programs are presented in the vicinity of the Cape Lookout Lighthouse.

As of 2010, programs that were previously funded through the North Carolina Coastal Federation will be discontinued due to a loss of grant funding to the Federation.

Volunteers provide invaluable services throughout the park



**Soundside Beach
on the west end of
Shackleford Banks**

Volunteers present short, 15-minute “porch talks” on the history and operation of the lighthouse on a daily basis from late March to around Thanksgiving. This time frame coincides with the operation of the Keepers’ Quarters Museum. In Portsmouth, volunteers present a guided walking tour of the village two to three days a week beginning in June and ending around Labor Day.

The challenge to the staff is presenting programs on topics of interest to visitors who are primarily concerned with recreational opportunities, or just spending the day at the beach. Most visitors do not come to the park aware that programs will be available or with the idea that they will attend such a program.

Analysis of Future Need: There is a need to explore opportunities to continue grant-funded programs such as Teacher-Ranger-Teacher, the

Youth Internship Program (YIP), Youth Partnership Program (YPP), and the Coastal Federation.

Programs for School Groups: Curriculum-Based

Nine North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NC-SCOS) curriculum-based activity guides and programs were completed in 2010. These programs can be presented by rangers or teachers, either off-site in a school setting or on-site at the park. A Parks as Classrooms grant received in 2008 allowed the park to contract for the development of a series of six activity guides for science and social studies for grades K, 4, and 6.

The NC-SCOS was also reviewed to identify areas where existing Cape Lookout programs and resources could be used to fulfill curriculum goals and objectives. This review

focused on the K-5 and 6-8 social studies and science components. In addition to identifying new program development areas, it also identified which current park programs already fulfilled curriculum requirements. Initial offerings of these off-site programs began in January 2010.

FIELD TRIPS

The primary time for school visitation is during the spring months, but schools do visit in the fall as well. Most teachers schedule their visits as learning opportunities that are also fun for students. The park's ability to provide programming to school groups is limited by the lack of available staff trained to present programs during the spring (most seasonal staff do not come on duty until after school ends). After the piloting of the curriculum-based programs is completed, the park will make this material available on-line for all educators. This will allow teachers, and/or NPS staff to facilitate programs at the school, and/or at the park.

Analysis of Future Need: There is a need to continue to develop programs that are “fun” and still “teach” in order to meet the expectations of both the students and the NC-SCOS curriculum. With an established set of programs from which to choose, more school groups would be able to take advantage of the park's resources. Depending on demand, this may provide justification for bringing on staff early enough to meet this need.

Outreach Services

Park staff from a variety of operations have provided interpretive programs and focused presentations at partner facilities, for meetings of user groups, for schools, and a variety of civic and other organizations. Talks range from presenting interpretive programs at the North Carolina Maritime Museum, to a variety of on-site and off-site programs presented to boat clubs, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Davis Island Fishing Foundation (DIFF), the Core Banks Fishing Club, and other organizations. These presentations are an important part of the park's effort to work together with those organizations and to reach out to their members.

A Traveling Trunk program allows scout troops, school classes, home school families, libraries, and other organizations to bring a small part of the park to them. These trunks have made their way as far as Colorado and New York as well as throughout North Carolina. Topics included in the trunks are Lighthouses, Sharks, and Whales. Under development is a trunk on the National Park Service and one on “The Many Hats of a Park Ranger” that introduces career opportunities to elementary age students. Other topics are under consideration.

The park has partnered with senior centers and senior residential facilities to bring enrichment programs to this underserved population. Under development are partnerships with traditional African-American churches, social clubs, and civic

groups. Other outreach partnership opportunities exist with area Boys and Girls Clubs, Head Start, and local military bases. The park has already participated in two Military Fun Days organized by the local Military Affairs Committee (MAC). These provide an opportunity for marines and sailors and their families to visit and enjoy local attractions.

The park participates in two local festivals each year: the North Carolina Seafood Festival in Morehead City, North Carolina (in October), and the Decoy Festival on Harkers Island, North Carolina (in December). Besides the static display on the park, the booth also incorporates an interactive activity, whether it is a touch table of shells, a “Be a Park Ranger” photo opportunity, or another activity.

The park will participate in a number of special events from time to time, including the Down East Christmas Parade (in December).

Junior Ranger Program

Cape Lookout National Seashore has a traditional, booklet-based Junior Ranger program. The booklets are free of charge and available at the Harkers Island and Light Station Visitor Centers. The age range for the activities in the booklets is from 5-13 years old. The older children complete more activities to earn their badges.

In 2009 the park received a grant for a Junior Ranger Ambassador to assist with the development of the

Junior Ranger Adventures program. While the Junior Ranger program is traditionally aimed at individual families, the Junior Ranger Adventures program was developed with groups (Scouts, schools, and others) in mind. The Adventures also can be considered an “advanced” version of the Junior Ranger program for use by returning families. There are five (5) different Adventures: Experience Cape Lookout; Saltwater Explorer; Island Investigator; Rescue Ranger; and Village Detective. Experience Cape Lookout is the most general, designed for grades 1-8, and requires no equipment other than the booklet. The other four adventures are designed for older children (grades 5-8) and have an accompanying backpack (for small groups or families) or a tote box (for larger groups) containing all the equipment necessary to complete the Adventure. A separate award system was developed for the Adventurers.

The Junior Ranger Ambassador also developed an activity booklet for the web. This downloadable file allows those who cannot come to the park to still become a Cape Lookout Junior Ranger. A downloadable certificate is awarded for completion. This booklet also can be used as a pre-visit activity by groups or families as they plan their visit.

Roving/Informal Interpretation

Roving is an opportunity to engage visitors wherever they may be and to offer whatever level of (mostly) informal interpretation that they are

ready for. Interpreters routinely answer questions and provide informal interpretation in the visitor center parking lot, on the ferry over to the lighthouse, along the boardwalk or the nature trails, and in any other areas where they come into contact with visitors. Additional rovers on the park's beaches would introduce many new audiences to Cape Lookout's messages.

Visitor Assistance

The staff receives and responds to requests for information in three ways: regular mail, by phone, and by email. Most of the email requests are generated from the park's website and are for general information about the park. In the spring, requests for specific information on the lighthouse increases as North Carolina's 4th grade classes begin their state history projects. Other information requests cover more specific information such as camping, off-road driving, kayaking, and other recreational questions. Requests by email are becoming the norm, with some users expecting responses the same day, if not within minutes.

Partnerships--Interpretation and Education Organizations

Cape Lookout National Seashore has both formal and informal partnerships with a variety of local, regional, and national organizations that assist with the park's interpretation mission. To varying degrees, each of the following organizations independently presents or focuses on part of the themes and stories identified as

important to Cape Lookout National Seashore. Taken as a whole, the contributions from individual partner organizations are indispensable.

Partners

- *Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center*
- *North Carolina Maritime Museum*
- *Fort Macon State Park (North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation)*
- *North Carolina Aquarium, Pine Knoll Shores*
- *North Carolina Coastal Federation*
- *North Carolina Rachel Carson Estuarine Reserve*
- *Morehead City Parks and Recreation*
- *Carteret County Schools*
- *Beaufort Middle School*
- *Harkers Island Elementary School*
- *Smyrna Elementary School*
- *Hyde County Schools*
- *Davis Island Fishing Foundation*
- *Core Banks Fishing Club*
- *Cape Lookout Mobile Sportfishermen*

Friends Group Partners

- *Friends of Cape Lookout National Seashore*
- *Friends of Portsmouth Island*



Introduction and Overall Goals

The *National Parks Second Century Commission report: Advancing the National Park Idea* (2010), page 43, lists the following interpretation and education goals, intended to guide the NPS interpretive program into the 21st century:

The National Park Service should:

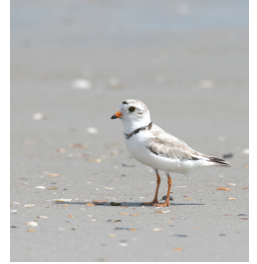
INVITE ALL AMERICANS to build a personal connection with the parks, placing high priority on engaging diverse audiences through its operations and programming.

OFFER OPPORTUNITIES for recreation, learning, and service that are relevant to visitors' interests, integral to their cultures, and foster appropriate enjoyment for all.

ENHANCE ITS CAPACITY to provide life-long, place-based learning across the system.

Efforts should include:

- Breaking down internal barriers between, and strengthening programmatic relationships among, the Service's preservation, research, and education functions.
- Replacing dated, broken, and inaccurate exhibits, signs and films, and other materials, with informational and explanatory media that exploit the most effective available technologies to present content that is current, accurate, and relevant, in formats that are as accessible as possible to the broadest range of visitors.
- Strengthening collaborations with partners, including community nonprofit organizations, and teachers at every level, to research and develop educational services and programs in and related to the parks and their natural and cultural surroundings.



Adult Piping Plover



FACILITATE use of current and leading-edge technologies and media to enhance place-based learning, including social networking.

CULTIVATE close relationships with Native American peoples, and convey appropriate Native understandings of national park lands, waters, resources, and stories through educational materials and programming.

RENEW AND REVITALIZE its commitment and capacity to engage internationally.

In 2009, Jon Jarvis, the 18th Director of the NPS, noted that “*the stewardship and care of our national parks, service to our visitors and the expansion of our community programs*” were his core responsibilities. To address these core responsibilities, Director Jarvis presented four broad areas that would form his initial focus: Workforce, Relevancy, Stewardship, and Education, which he outlined as follows:

Workforce: *The day-to-day operation of the parks and the work of community assistance programs is accomplished by the dedicated men and women (including amazing volunteers) of the NPS who empty the trash, enter the payroll, rescue the lost, clear the trails, help communities, sample the air and water, and tell our compelling stories. The welfare and safety of these people are a top priority.*

Relevancy: *There is deep concern among NPS professionals and others that national parks will become irrelevant to a society that is disconnected*

from nature and history. We need to help all Americans—especially young people—discover a personal connection to their national parks. While the places are spectacular, it is our people that make parks come alive. In Ken Burns’ documentary The National Parks: America’s Best Idea, he focuses as much on the people as on the parks: employees, residents of gateway communities, scientists, scholars, politicians, indigenous people, activists, concessioners, volunteers, partners, and, of course, visitors. Without them, the National Park System would not exist, many parks would never have been established, and the National Park Service would not have the deep support of the American people that we enjoy. I believe every American will relate to and cherish their national parks if given the chance to connect, by technology or by visiting. Beyond parks, our recreation and historic preservation community assistance programs reach and benefit families near their homes in ways that the parks cannot. I plan to expand these programs.

Stewardship: *Stewardship of our natural and cultural resources has always been a core value of mine. Our mission is to manage these treasured landscapes unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. This mission is being challenged, particularly by global warming. But at the same time, these challenges are pushing us to think and act at the ecosystem scale, creating unprecedented partnerships with other land managers. We must apply the very best science and scholarly research. To do*

so, I will create the position of Science Advisor to the Director. As stewards of our national parks, especially considering the challenges of climate change, we must be visible leaders using the sustainability of our facilities and operations to demonstrate the best in energy and water conservation.

Education: *Education is a primary responsibility of the NPS. Visitors should be able to see predators and prey act on their instincts. American history must be portrayed fully, without bias or embellishment, the good and bad parts of the American experience told with equal intelligence. Service learning opportunities must be enhanced. Parks truly are classrooms that help people understand and appreciate the complexities of the natural world and of the historic events that have shaped it and our lives. There are many partners in the educational community who will welcome us, and I intend to reach out to them. To elevate this function, I will create an Associate Director for Education and Interpretation.*

The National Park Service *Interpretation and Education Renaissance Action Plan* (2006) presented nine findings and specific recommendations to improve the interpretation programs of the service.

Cape Lookout National Seashore will strive to do its part as a unit of the National Park System to implement the above recommendations and priorities, and those outlined in the next sections.

Park Specific Recommendations

Recommendations for interpretation and education programs at Cape Lookout National Seashore are presented in four parts: 1) by interpretive venue, 2) for development of an enhanced educational outreach program, 3) for the park's website, and 4) for promotion and marketing of park programs. The recommendations are sorted into short- and long-range priorities. In addition, some general recommendations that apply to all park venues collectively are presented.

Recommendations by Interpretive Venue

Cape Lookout National Seashore encompasses over 56 miles of barrier islands, with a number of interpretive venues, each quite different from the others and located in many cases quite remotely from each other. While each venue shares interpretive content to a degree, recommendations vary depending on local conditions at each unit. (Each unit is described in more detail in the Existing Conditions section of this document.)

The park's interpretive venues include:

- Harkers Island Visitor Center area.
- Lighthouse Station area.
- Cape Village area.
- The Education Center.
- Shackleford Banks.
- Long Point and Great Island Cabin lodging.

- Portsmouth Village.
- Proposed and existing ferry departure sites, with partners, off site.
- Existing ferry arrival sites.

Harkers Island Visitor Center Area

Although remote from many park venues (Portsmouth Village, Long Point, Great Island) and most of the ferry departure sites (Ocracoke, Atlantic, Davis, Beaufort, and Morehead City), the visitor center provides the only location at the seashore to which people can drive their vehicles. With its exhibits, film, and bookstore, as well as nature trails and picnic area, the visitor center provides an overview of Cape Lookout National Seashore, addressing all five interpretive themes. The neighboring Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center interprets traditional life typical of the Down East communities.

The proposed consolidation of Harkers Island ferry service at the Harkers Island boat basin next to the visitor center will generate more visitor traffic both inside and outside the visitor center. Ticket sales for both ferry and lighthouse climbs are likely to create new responsibilities at the site. Front desk staff will need to be prepared to handle a greater influx of visitors, which means they will have fewer opportunities to work on projects, answer phones, or perform reception duties while on front desk duty.

Other implications: there will be a need for a sheltered, shaded outdoor

space for inclement weather; a kiosk with information about the ferry; and a place or way to register for scheduled activities. There is a need for more information about the lighthouse to inform visitors who are contemplating a visit, as well as new ways for visitors to access information about park natural resources, resource protection, and themes.

Finally, there is a need to continue to strengthen the NPS brand identity in the region beyond the deployment of orientation waysides and the park's publications (i.e., the newspaper). People throughout the region, including both residents and visitors, are generally unaware that the National Park Service manages all of the seashore from Ocracoke Inlet to Beaufort Inlet.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: HARKERS ISLAND VISITOR CENTER AREA:

- Enhance interpretation of the lighthouse, not only the Cape Lookout world-class lighthouse example, but also the history of the development of the coastal light-houses/services. (Not everyone gets over to the Cape to see the Keepers' Quarters Museum exhibit.)
- Develop a concept plan for how the Cape Lookout Lighthouse Fresnel lens will be displayed, along with a funding request for the transfer, restoration, and future display of the lens.
- Connect interpretation of the lighthouse to this original lens, now residing at the Southeast Block Island Light off Rhode Island. The lens could anchor an exhibit that features new interpretive panels, as

well as reproductions of some of the panels currently on display at the lighthouse. It may be necessary to build an addition to the visitor center to house the lens.

- Expand the visitor center bulletin board or develop a computer/TV information delivery system to post visitor information such as lighthouse ticketing protocol, ferry schedule, all services provided, and what to bring.
- Create a brochure to be offered with each ticket to the lighthouse, interpreting important lighthouse features.
- Create additional park orientation waysides and information signs and systems letting visitors know status, fees, and ticketing protocol for the new ferry departure site at the boat basin, as well as for the lighthouse climb.
- Add more carpeted bulletin board panels to the hallway outside the resource management office doors to allow the resource management staff to communicate resource information to the public.
- Provide an interpretive video for visitors to view as they wait to board the ferry at Harkers Island. This could also serve in multiple venues to interpret the lighthouse to visitors on days when the tower is not open for climbing.
 - ◆ Partner with a future concession operator or the Crystal Coast Tourism Development Authority (TDA) to create a video.
- Create a directional sign to the Core Sound Museum at the Visitor Center parking lot with information about what this facility offers in order to

inform visitors about this additional nearby visitor opportunity.

- Improve Harkers Island Visitor Center operations with respect to sustainable and environmental design. Complete additional interpretive wayside exhibits, including interpretive information on sustainable design efforts, Harkers Island shoreline protection, and the water gardens.
- Add an interpretive wayside on the anchor.
- Strengthen visitor recognition of the nature trail through ground work in front of the visitor center leading back to the visitor center employee parking bridge and/or through signs in front of or in the visitor center.
- Rework the surface of the nature trail, removing or smoothing its coarse gravel tread surface to improve wheelchair accessibility.
- Strengthen ways to link to information about park natural resources and resource protection messages. Provide a visitor-operated computer information kiosk.
- Develop a “guide’s guide” for use as a training manual for frontline staff and ferry operators.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: HARKERS ISLAND VISITOR CENTER AREA:

- Create a kayak launch, and places for additional activities such as fishing and kite boarding.
- Establish nearby an outside/shower or faucet for a personal rinse off area (feet, hands, face, etc.) – in order to keep this type of use out of the visitor center restrooms. Once the outdoor wash area is established, a small sign

A climb well worth
the effort



in the restroom could reinforce the desired behavior.

- Improve signage on nature trails by creating a more obvious trailhead, and with additional wayside exhibits.

Cape Lookout Light Station Area

The area near the lighthouse offers a number of visitor amenities and interpretive opportunities. Besides the lighthouse itself, there is the Cape Lookout Light Station Visitor Center, a shade pavilion for the presentation of interpretive programs, the Keepers' Quarters Museum, and of course the superb Atlantic Ocean beach. The area is accessible only by commercial ferry, by private boat, or by off road vehicle (ORV) from Great Island. All themes are interpreted at this venue.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: CAPE LOOKOUT LIGHT STATION AREA

- Develop a cost effective, environmentally desirable green energy system to provide power for the Light

Station area. Alternatively, evaluate the ramifications of taking full responsibility for the USCG power cable to utilize a higher level of its capacity.

- Develop waysides and other information to interpret the sustainable design elements that have been implemented.
- Plan on phasing out water sales in disposable bottles; provide a variety of reusable containers at the park's Eastern National store and provide a source of cool water so that visitors may fill up those bottles. Interpret the watering station.
- Continue the park wide "Trash Free Park" program; interpret the program.
- Offer visitors a free self-guided tour or guide to the lighthouse as part of their ticket value. Visitors scheduled to climb the lighthouse at a designated time gather at the base of the building just five minutes before they go in. Ensure that all visitors receive a short introduction to the significance of the lighthouse and the required safety messages prior to entering the tower.
- Ensure that lighthouse climb staff are prepared to interpret the lighthouse and keeper history in order to take advantage of interpretive opportunities, but do not attempt to provide formal interpretation in the tower; staff have observed that once visitors are on the upper observation deck, they desire to take pictures during the limited time available, or enjoy the view, rather than listen to a "formal program."
- Add more interpretation of light

house history.

- Continue with plans to install a webcam at the top of the lighthouse with monitors to be installed in the Keepers' Quarters Museum and the Harkers Island Visitor Center.
- Continue to offer and strengthen ranger talks on natural resources and natural resource protection efforts at the seashore.
- Provide a roving ranger on the beach to interpret natural resource and resource protection themes. Ensure that roving is focused.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: CAPE LOOKOUT LIGHT STATION AREA

- Implement the recommendation of the *Cape Lookout Village Historic Structure Reuse Implementation Plan/EA/EOF (2006)* and FONSI to relocate the 1907 Keeper's Quarters to its original setting on the Light Station grounds, to be used as a historic house museum and volunteer quarters; prepare funding requests for this work.
- Implement prescriptions in the *Cape Lookout Village Cultural Landscape Report (May 9, 2005)*; consider alternative treatments for management, restoration, and interpretation of the light station grounds, and prepare funding requests for high priority projects that identify and stabilize site features, restore important site characteristics, and interpret artifacts relating to the continuity of historic uses of the site.
- Add wayside exhibits and/or develop a guide to interpret the variety of visible ruins and missing original

features such as the cistern.

- Add extended and/or temporary exhibits to the center hallway in the Keepers' Quarters, perhaps portraits of keepers from the station, or an interpretation of the VIP Keeper program that identifies current and possibly past volunteer keepers.
- Maintain existing waysides.
- Maintain existing Keepers' Quarters Exhibits and AV equipment.
- Maintain existing visitor center/Bookstore.
- Maintain existing location and wayfinding signs.

U.S. Coast Guard Station Complex and "Cape Village" Area

The thirteen contributing structures of the Cape Village Historic District and surroundings are accessed by ORVs from Davis, North Carolina, via Great Island, by ferry/truck transportation from the light station area offered by permitted local businesses, by private boat, and by pedestrians from the lighthouse area. The significant historical buildings within the historic district include the Life-Saving Station, the Coast Guard Station (including its boat house), and the 1907 Keeper's Quarters, as well as undeveloped areas rich with natural resources. Based on recommendations in the *Cape Lookout Village Historic Structure Reuse Implementation Plan/EA/AoE (2006)*, eight to ten structures in the village will be rented for overnight use.



Cape Lookout Light
from the Education
Center Area

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: U.S.C.G. STATION COMPLEX AND CAPE VILLAGE AREA

- Improve transportation services from the lighthouse area to the Cape Village and the Cape Lookout point in order to give visitors better access to the cultural resources of the Cape Village Historic District. The park *Commercial Services Plan/EA (2008)* recommends that the transportation service be integrated with a future concession ferry operation from Harkers Island and a potential cabin rental operation within the district.
- Install web cams (including infrared for night viewing) showing birds and turtles nesting.

- Add additional signage regarding bird enclosures and why they are there.
- Offer a beach-combing program with a ranger to reach people with resource management goals.
- Create a web-based virtual tour of the village.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: U.S.C.G. STATION COMPLEX AND CAPE VILLAGE AREA

- Prepare funding requests to implement recommendations of the *Cape Lookout Village Historic Structure Re-Use Implementation Plan EA/AoE (2006)* including:
 - ◆ Relocation and restoration of the Cape Lookout Life-Saving Station

as a code compliant building and installation of exhibits on the Coast Guard

- ◆ Relocation, and restoration of the Cape Lookout Coast Guard Boathouse.
- ◆ Restoration of a cabin as a furnished summer house to interpret recreating on the Cape.
- ◆ Restoration of the U.S.C.G. Station as code compliant building, and evaluation of the potential to reuse the structure as a second environmental education facility. Up until 2008, the Coast Guard station was dedicated (in a cooperative agreement) for use by the North Carolina Maritime Museum for their Cape Lookout Studies Program, a residential environmental education program. The program was discontinued because the facilities did not comply with fire and life-safety codes.
- When historic buildings are restored, cabins are rented, and visitation warrants it, offer interpretation and demonstrations of features of maritime life, including life-saving, whaling, etc.
- Inventory existing World War II assets in the area.
- Partner with North Carolina's Fort Macon State Park, North Carolina Maritime Museum, and others to tell the whole barrier islands World War II story.
- ◆ Interpret tangible World War II elements via wayside signage.
- ◆ Develop a site bulletin for World

War II stories for which physical evidence no longer exists; highlight stories such as the Signal Corps, U.S. Army operations, etc.

- ◆ Create a section of the park website devoted to the World War II story.
- ◆ Explore the feasibility of offering a web-based virtual tour that includes Cape Lookout's World War II stories.
- Maintain existing wayside exhibits at the 1907 Keeper's Quarters, Life-Saving Station and U.S.C.G. Station Complex.

Education Center

The code compliant center includes a main facility, kitchen facility, storage/generator shed, and three associated cabins. The main facility includes a meeting room with audio visual equipment, sleeping rooms for up to 20 individuals, and two separate toilet/shower rooms. The kitchen will provide equipment to properly store, cook, and warm group meals in compliance with U.S. health codes. The three individual cabins each have a living/sleeping area, kitchenette, and bathroom with a shower, and can house two and potentially three individuals each.

Challenges to completing this project include providing electricity, back-up power, and other utilities that are essential for operation of kitchen appliances (required by Public Health codes) and building safety features such as a central fire alarm and suppression system (required by Fire and Life Safety codes.) The center dock

Visiting the
horses on
Shackleford Banks



and immediate buildings are designed to be ADA compliant.

Multiple organizations have voiced an interest in using and/or leasing the facilities. Because of the broad interest in the center, the NPS will review appropriate models for operation of education centers and will solicit public and partner input into how the center might operate.

The following recommendations/principles are important to consider with respect to the future operation and management of the center:

- A residential education program will be the primary focus of the center.
 - ◆ Topics addressed at the facility should be related to the park and its themes but need not be limited to science or environmental education; it should also be open to the humanities, artists, poets, musicians, etc.
 - ◆ The facility should be set up to facilitate educational programming.
 - ◆ Appropriate center program needs should be supported (such as demonstration of sustainable design, and provision of environmental education, natural, and cultural history materials).
- The center should be available for the broadest range of appropriate overnight and day uses, and accordingly, the NPS does not plan to lease the center facilities exclusively to one organization for their sole use.
 - ◆ Spring, summer, and fall are the most promising seasons. Spring and fall are important because interpreting partners are less busy than they are in summer, and because schools are still in session. The buildings are not air conditioned in summer, nor heated in winter—but they could be, if demand for those seasons could be demonstrated.
- Using professional education staff, the NPS will take an active role in the development, review, and execution of the education program and the coordination of center partnerships.
- The NPS will seek multiple partners who will be responsible for the development and execution of the education program and the day-to-day operation of center facilities.
 - ◆ Center operations include such things as: development of a menu of education programs, curriculum programs, teacher workshops; marketing of center programs; scheduling programs and collection of attendance fees; check-in, facilitation of programs and check-out; routine cleaning and annual maintenance.

- The center should be financially sustainable through programmatic fees and a funds development program managed by the partners on behalf of the center and the NPS.
 - ◆ By NPS policy, center fees should be based on comparable services.
 - ◆ The cost of attendance of center programs should not be prohibitive (and might be subsidized) for low-income and traditionally underserved audiences.
- The NPS should retain some level of oversight/control of the center facilities.

Shackleford Banks

Shackleford Banks is designated as a “proposed wilderness area” and by NPS policy must be managed so as not to impair its wilderness character. Many local families, some of whom are descendants of former residents of Diamond City, a town that used to exist on the east end of Shackleford Banks, still have strong emotional ties to the island.

Generations of families have camped and fished there, so any interpretation should be sensitive to local heritage issues. Day-use visitors to the area come to walk on the beach, to view the horses, to look for shells, to fish, and to enjoy the unspoiled nature of the place. Others come to camp on the five miles of sandy sound-side beaches. Visitors arrive by ferry; many come by private boat, and some visit the island using kayaks.

Because of the easy access from the towns of Beaufort and Morehead City and from Harkers Island, Shackleford’s

west end shores can be very busy and crowded on summer holiday weekends.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: SHACKLEFORD BANKS

- When the ferry concession is in place, develop and operate a regularly scheduled fee-based interpretive program, requiring advance reservations, that focuses on the Shackleford Banks horses, and includes access both to the horses, and to those who manage the herd.
- Add park orientation waysides at the new ferry arrival area on the west end of Shackleford Banks.
- Develop fee-based eco-tours based on Shackleford Banks clam beds that might include harvesting the clams, and then cooking and eating clams onsite.
- Station a roving interpreter at the ferry drop off to greet visitors, convey safety messages, and interpret horses, turtles, birds, and the ocean environment.
- Repurpose existing print materials, like bird guides and guides to plants in the maritime forest, and offer them in multiple formats, including print and online.
- Create a section of the park website dedicated to Shackleford Banks interpretation.
- Partner with Crystal Coast TDA to post a video podcast about Shackleford Banks horses to the park website.
- Post five canoe/kayaking maps, originally developed by the Crystal Coast Kayak Club, and now being reprinted by CCTDA, to seashore website.

- Communicate about Shackleford Banks through the use of social media, provide updated information, safety, and resource protection messages.
- Purchase a beach wheelchair specifically for Shackleford Banks, but based out of the Beaufort or Morehead City concession facility.
- Continue to facilitate use of Shackleford Banks by interpretive partners. Enhance all partners' offerings by coordinating availability of partner programs at Shackleford Banks.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: SHACKLEFORD BANKS

- Maintain two sets of three-in-line park orientation, area interpretation (horses), and safety waysides at Wade Shores bathroom, and the ferry dock.
- Maintain limited wayfinding signage, as defined in the Wilderness Management Plan.
- In consultation and/or partnership with a new concession ferry operation and others, determine the need for and implement additional three-in-line orientation waysides at alternative ferry arrival areas.
- If demand exists, and via partners, offer personal services centered on recreation (but with a resource conservation message), such as guided kayak tours, fishing lessons, snorkeling, etc.
- Partner with kayak groups to create a GPS-guided tour on the backside of Shackleford Banks.
- Work with Crystal Coast TDA to survey tour boat and environmental

education excursion providers regarding their interpretive needs.

- Work with ferry operators to improve onboard interpretation, either for special events or everyday visitation, through online or printed media.
- Create a web-based brochure/history map to interpret Shackleford Banks cultural history. Since the proposed wilderness area would prohibit the installation of permanent signs or markers, consider using GPS coordinates to guide walkers on the route.

Long Point and Great Island

The Long Point and Great Island areas on North and South Core Banks are the ferry arrival points and gateways to off-road vehicle-based camping and world-class surf-fishing on over 40 miles of seashore beach, as well as cabin vacations, limited day-use, and other activities.

These two venues are addressed as one because the audiences and visitor experiences are similar. The busiest seasons are fall and spring, when these venues are packed with fishermen. There are 20 rustic cabins for rent at Long Point, and 25 at Great Island.

As with many recreational visitors, this audience segment typically does not seek out formal interpretive programs. However, they should at a minimum receive safety messages, resource education messages (especially relating to species protection and ORV use, in compliance with the *Interim Protected Species Management Plan/EA (2007)*, and a future ORV Management Plan), and NPS/Cape

Lookout National Seashore park identification/branding information.

Although fishers are the primary visitors using these gateways, a second audience at these venues is family gatherings, many of which have returned every summer for generations. These families like the isolation and adventure and the frontier experience provided by the rustic cabins. With the offering of additional services, such as instruction in beach activities like surf fishing and kayaking, it might be possible to extend the season for this largely summer audience.

Both audiences arrive via automobile/passenger ferry (Long Point from Atlantic and Great Island from Davis).

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: LONG POINT AND GREAT ISLAND

- Greet ferry passengers and provide resource protection/ORV information to all that arrive by ferry and some that arrive by private vessel. Collect data on ORV use (per *Interim Protected Species Management Plan*).
- Add park orientation waysides at Atlantic and Davis ferry departure sites.
- Provide outreach programs to a variety of ORV user groups.
- Provide safety information (i.e. swimming safety/rip-current awareness, safe vehicle use, shark avoidance, poisonous plants/animals, prevention of nuisance animal encounters, etc.) to visitors using a number of modes (signs, cabin information centers, site bulletins,

waysides, and websites, etc.).

- Provide Junior Ranger packets/kits and other information packets, including nature guides, for use by camping families, perhaps handed out at the ferry arrival dock by volunteers.
- Place additional wayside exhibits at arrival points or common areas on the island emphasizing resource protection and safety messages.
- Place materials in each cabin—interpretive panels, nature guides, and notebooks with information about rules, resource protection, marine resources, record catches, contact information, target species such as red drum, etc.
- Provide interpretation using waysides, and site bulletins.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: LONG POINT AND GREAT ISLAND

- Work with Tourism Authority to survey people at ferry sites in Atlantic and Davis who are accessing the camping areas to determine their interpretive and recreational preferences and needs.
- Provide interpretive services, either demonstrations or teaching opportunities (like leading kayak excursions) or traditional ranger programs during the day or evening presented by available staff at the camp.
- Once a ferry concession is established, work with concessioners and ferry captains to provide interpretation on board ferries. Apply for transportation grants to fund the interpreters.
- Place an audio/visual program

**Portsmouth Village,
former Post Office
and General Store**



onboard vehicle ferries or other larger ferries.

- Maintain bulletin boards, park orientation, and visitor safety waysides.
- Maintain signage.

Portsmouth Village

Chartered in 1753, Portsmouth Village is the most remote from headquarters of all Cape Lookout developed areas. It is at the northern-most end of the park across Ocracoke Inlet from the southernmost end of Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

The village looms large in the early maritime history of the colony and State of North Carolina and the new Nation, only to be abandoned as a commercial center at the end of the Civil War, a victim of storms and changing inlets, the Civil War, emancipation, and technology (steamships, railways, and the Dismal Swamp Canal).

In 2007 the park installed two sets of three park orientation waysides (36" by 48" upright panels, including park

identification/area identification and safety information), five interpretive waysides (24" by 36" panels), and twenty trailside markers to identify most of the Portsmouth structures. In 2009 the park installed new interior exhibits at the Theodore and Annie Salter House Visitor Center, the Post Office, the School, and the Life-Saving Station.

Volunteers provide personal interpretation to visitors, who arrive by commercial ferry or private boat. The ocean beach near the village is famous for shells, especially the uncommon Scotch Bonnet.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

- Partner with the Crystal Coast Visitor's Bureau and other partners to market the Portsmouth Village Historic District as a destination.
- Continue to partner with the Friends of Portsmouth Island to manage and interpret the Portsmouth Village Historic District.
- Partner with Cape Hatteras National Seashore, the Town of Ocracoke, or a ferry operator to install permanent interpretive information about Portsmouth Village near Ocracoke Harbor.
- Work with the passenger ferry operator and other CUA permittees to enhance ferry-based interpretive messages.
- Work with the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) at Ocracoke in developing teacher workshops.
- Provide for visitor services/greeting

visitors arriving by ferry, informal interpretation, resource protection, security, visitor safety, and emergency management.

- Continue program emphasis on static media as main mode of interpretation.
- Continue to support the biennial Portsmouth Homecoming.
- Complete development of an audio program (in progress 2010). Work with partners to market availability of the program.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: PORTSMOUTH VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

- Partner with the Friends of Portsmouth Island and others to develop one structure as a furnished house/living history area. The current recommendation is to focus on the Henry Pigott House.
- Develop a genealogy exhibit and portrait gallery. Implement both on the web and on-site in an available structure.
- Develop a web-based virtual tour of the village in cooperation with a university that uses/teaches the best technology (such as the University of California, Merced). Owing to sea level rise, the importance of this recommendation cannot be stressed enough because much, if not all of the village may eventually be lost to the sea.
- Develop a pilot program to test the effectiveness of demonstrations and other special interpretive programs in the village.

- Maintain wayside orientation, interpretive, and building identification waysides.
- Maintain four building exhibits: Theodore and Annie Salter House Visitor Center, School, Post Office/Store, and the Life-Saving Station.
- Maintain five buildings as interpretive venues, and keep open to the public: Theodore and Annie Salter House Visitor Center, Post Office/Store, School, Church, and the Life-Saving Station.

Proposed Ferry Departure Site (Morehead or Beaufort)

The park has initiated a planning effort to consider alternative sites for an NPS ferry.

The park *Commercial Services Plan (CSP)/EA (2008)* recommended that the 14 small boat passenger ferries operating under permit from Ocracoke, Harkers Island, Beaufort, and Morehead City be consolidated under fewer concession contracts. The park CSP proposes to establish a single concession ferry in either Morehead City or Beaufort in order to:

- Provide long-term visitor access through a publicly-owned ferry departure facility.
- Provide crucial interpretive messages more consistently, especially with regard to safety and resource management issues (vendor contracts will specify desired level of interpretation).
- Increase the visibility of the national park in the region.

Interpretation at the proposed ferry departure site could involve both NPS staff and other interpretive partners.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: FERRY DEPARTURE SITE

- With partners, provide a volunteer, partner, or NPS-staffed information desk to provide orientation to park information, safety, and trip planning.
- With partners, develop wayside exhibits for visitors waiting to board a ferry.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: FERRY DEPARTURE SITE

- Create an electronic kiosk to provide orientation and interpretive messages.
- Provide informal, roving interpretation on site.

Recommendations for Enhancing Educational Outreach

Teachers face a number of obstacles, including expense, logistics, and emphasis on test preparation in the classroom when planning a field trip to Cape Lookout National Seashore. Management priorities therefore include a continuing and enhanced emphasis on outreach beyond park boundaries, especially to local schools, K-12.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The following key principles will guide development of educational outreach:

- For program sustainability, outreach should be fee-based. Based on comparable organizations offering similar programs, it should be possible to fund a full-time outreach coordinator position from fees, and to cover all expenses.

- ◆ The fee schedule must be adequate to cover the establishment of a scholarship fund to cover the costs of visits of some organizations that cannot afford the fee; plan for sustainability from the beginning by leveraging one part of the program to support another.
- The program should be managed by a full-time outreach/education coordinator.
- A “Teacher Boot Camp,” aimed at preparing teachers to bring Cape Lookout National Seashore’s themes and stories back to their classrooms, should be organized in the summer, based in underutilized venues, such as the cabins at Long Point and Great Island, or the Education Center. NPS personnel would train about 12 teachers per year, greatly increasing the program’s “bang for the buck.”

FEE-BASED OUTREACH PROGRAM.

While the main focus of this program will be outreach to schools, outreach can be extended to elder groups and others with specific needs.

- All programming must be curriculum-based in order for teachers to be able to justify participation. At the same time, the program must remain true to the NPS mission.
- Demand for school programs can be overwhelming. The outreach coordinator should expect to perform outreach only three weeks out of every four, reserving time for organizing and preparation.

- The program should generally be fee-based, and will likely be self-supporting. Resources in the NPS are limited, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Participating schools will pay a fee, as well as a per-mile charge, for outreach travel to the classroom, both for the outreach coordinator, and visiting classroom rangers/interpreters.
- The first step toward the outreach program is to create a business plan that lays out projected income and expenses. The plan should be based on those of other comparable institutions with similar missions.
- The business plan is then used to support requests for loans or grants for upfront start-up costs. Any such loans would be paid back as the program gains momentum.
- Under-privileged groups can be served through grant programs or through revenue acquired through assessment of program fees in excess of actual per-visit costs.

“TEACHER BOOT CAMP.” Participating teachers live in rustic cabins or at the Education Center in an immersion setting while they are trained to bring Cape Lookout’s themes and stories to their classrooms. Ideally, teachers would not be charged to participate in the “Boot Camp.” The park will explore ways of funding this teacher program, perhaps through the Friends of Cape Lookout, or through corporate sponsorship, or both.

- A critical part of the program is teacher-developed curriculum

materials that will be created during Boot Camp. These materials will be shared with other teachers through a number of modes, including via Cape Lookout National Seashore’s website.

- The Outreach Coordinator could be assigned to the summer Teacher Boot Camp program, while performing outreach during the winter months when school is in session. Interpretive and resource management division staff would participate in training, along with outside experts, researchers, etc.
- Teachers are to be from North Carolina in the beginning, but eventually the program could be expanded to teachers from throughout the nation.
- Program certification should be available in order to offer participants professional development credits.
- Teachers will be required to submit an application to participate. Participation is on a competitive basis.
- Teachers will be required to sign a contract that lays out the criteria and rules for participation, as well as the expectations of the program when they return to their classrooms.
- The program must include an evaluative element that will provide data to support continuing funding.
- Something as simple as a free Survey Monkey account can be used to survey teachers about program effectiveness.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL OUT-REACH.

A variety of resource materials can and

should be made available to teachers to support education and curriculum-based education programs.

- Traditional traveling trunks can be made available to schools.
- Curriculum resource kits (school-based trunks) may be established to provide schools with easily obtainable support materials for curriculum-based education programs.
- The park can also link to program outreach materials that are available through other partner organizations with the goal of reducing redundancy and increasing the subject-matter reach of the organizations' collective programs.
- The park can work with the North Carolina Center of the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) to develop teacher workshops.

Recommendations for Website

The Cape Lookout National Seashore website is organized under and structured by a mandated NPS-wide content management system (CMS). With the increasing emphasis on and world-wide reach of electronic media, social networking sites, and frequent migration of all content to new versions of the NPS CMS, web-site maintenance has become a critical effort and ever-increasing workload.

In FY 2010 web updates were assigned as collateral duty to the GS-9 PFT interpreter. Due to a lack of staff time, there is a significant backlog of

web-site work at the park. Extended content pages for cultural and natural history, a number of available pages within the NPS CMS, and numerous ideas for enhancement of the web site have not yet been implemented.

The following key principles will guide development of an enhanced website:

- There is a need for a full-time media specialist to maintain the seashore publications and focus on website development/web graphic design/implementation and other media products, including social media and podcasts. These duties cannot be collateral on top of other responsibilities. The individual hired as a media specialist should have graphic design and web training.
- Park Staff should seek to fully implement (activate) all appropriate sections of the NPS CMS system. The website should be user-friendly, logical, and attractive, and should follow accepted web design concepts.
- The website should be expanded to include the following kinds of information:
 - ◆ Photos/Multi-media.
 - ◆ Podcasts.
 - ◆ Links to educational information.
 - ◆ Virtual tours of Portsmouth, Cape Lookout Light, horses, etc.
 - ◆ Visitor information (for prospective visitors): what to bring, ferry information, suggested itineraries.
 - ◆ Field guides (shells, birds, fish, plants).
 - ◆ Access to research on the collection, or to ongoing scientific research projects.

- ◆ Access to the park oral history collection.
- ◆ New and expanded cultural history and natural history information.
- ◆ ORV use.
- ◆ Current and historical information on the Cape Lookout Lighthouse and Portsmouth Village.
- ◆ Curriculum-based educational materials.
- ◆ The kids' page, by kids for kids (completed but not linked as of this writing.)
- The website should effectively link to or incorporate appropriate existing partner material. There is a great deal that can be repurposed for free for use on the website.
- Re-purpose as many exhibit plans to the park web as feasible. For example, post the final graphic layouts of all the new waysides and exhibit panels that have been produced for Portsmouth Village and the Keepers' Quarters at the lighthouse—for instant content in the Photos/Multimedia section.
- Update and transfer to the park website over 50 web pages related to natural and cultural resources that could not be transitioned in the last CMS update. Update the planning, writing, and design of these web pages.
- Work with schools to allow students to generate content for new types of media. For example, the Carteret County School Media and Technical Coordinator should be approached

as a possible partner in creating kid-generated content.

- Engage teachers as summer employees to create media content and enhance social media opportunities.
- After the piloting of curriculum-based programs is completed, make this material available on-line for all educators, and where possible, provide rangers/VIPs to meet student groups and provide some level of orientation and welcome to the park.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: WEBSITE

- Post all existing media to the website: print materials, design layouts for wayside exhibits, photographs, etc. Continue to post all media as developed.
- Create a virtual tour that replicates a climb to the top of the lighthouse (partner with Crystal Coast TDA).
- Identify a partner who could help develop web content for posting on a park or partner website.
- Link to the seashore webpage (including an interactive map) created by a Beaufort Middle School computer class. This builds on the management directive to prioritize kid-created content, and should be encouraged and even enhanced by the park.
- Work with area school districts to involve students in creating “e-field trips.”
- Provide webcams of such features as the top of the lighthouse, and nesting birds and turtles.

- Create a section of the website dedicated to the interpretation of Shackleford Banks.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: WEBSITE

- Use the existing Restivo template to create a virtual, on-line tour of Cape Lookout National Seashore.
- Create a virtual tour of Portsmouth Village. Owing to sea level rise, the importance of this recommendation cannot be stressed enough because much, if not all, of the village might eventually be lost to the sea.
- Create a section of the website dedicated to World War II stories.

Recommendations for Promotion/Marketing

The park is especially fortunate to have the full, enthusiastic support of the Crystal Coast Tourism Development Authority (CCTDA). Not only does the CCTDA bring enthusiasm and experience to the task of promoting area resources, but it has funds as well. The CCTDA will share resources, perform surveys, and provide any necessary support in promoting Seashore programs and activities. Some points to consider:

- The CCTDA website tracks and provides information about vacancies and bookings. This service could extend to the park's rustic cabins if the information can be conveyed in a timely way. This may serve to extend the rental season and lead to more fully booked summers.
- The CCTDA website serves as a central clearing house for programs and activities offered in the area, as well as issuing a weekly email promoting area programs to everyone on the contact list. Not only should the Seashore plan to submit programs to CCTDA, but the website should be made available to visitors on site, especially at Harkers Island Visitor Center, perhaps via electronic kiosk.
- ◆ The Seashore website should link to the CCTDA's website, as well as to other area interpreting organizations.
- ◆ Through the CCTDA, Seashore personnel can become aware of what is being offered in partner organizations, in order to provide more detailed visitor information about potential experiences while visiting Cape Lookout.
- ◆ Programs will need to be scheduled at least six months in advance to be listed in area events calendars.
- The Seashore should work with interpreting partners and the CCTDA to develop and disseminate proposed itineraries that would suggest activities based on visitor interest and the amount of time they have to spend on the Cape. The itineraries would be provided via partner/TDA websites, as well as brochures. The itineraries should list a wide variety of programs by the park and all area interpreting organizations.
- It is critical that all frontline staff members be well trained and superbly informed about park and area attractions and resources.

Parkwide Recommendations

The following recommendations address park-wide issues, and are not tied to any one venue or interpretive theme.

■ **RIDE WITH A RANGER.** Every Saturday in summer, the barrier islands of North Carolina are witness to a mass migration. Visitors leave on Saturday morning, and new ones arrive in the afternoon. Many of these visitors, both coming and going, travel on the Cedar Island Ferry between Ocracoke and the mainland. The 2-1/2 hour (one way) ferry ride provides a golden opportunity to convey resource protection messages.

◆ Partner with Cape Hatteras National Seashore to test the feasibility of stationing a ranger on the ferry each Saturday in summer, with Junior Ranger and other materials in hand, who can converse and interact with passengers, answer questions, and interpret the surrounding maritime environment, including what they may see at the end of their ride. Note that passengers leaving Ocracoke Island might well be headed south to visit Cape Lookout, while visitors coming to Ocracoke are prime candidates for the resource messages shared by both barrier island parks.

◆ The presence of a ranger on the ferry would also strengthen the NPS brand and awareness on the part of the public.

◆ Provide a video monitor and video content on park resources (including those of Cape Hatteras

National Seashore) onboard, for times when a ranger is not available.

■ **HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATIONS.** One way to reach recreational audiences with interpretive messages might be to offer participatory demonstrations, such as surf fishing, crabbing, and the “Snorkel with a Ranger” program at Cape Hatteras. These services could be provided by the NPS or by partners like the North Carolina Aquarium, using local residents, whose voices and life stories would add depth to the experience. The partners could cross-train and share interpretation in these areas. Needed for this program: 1) resources, 2) good partner communication/cross-marketing strategies, and 3) a means to insure message consistency.

■ **CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAMS.** The recent growth in ecotourism includes many people who want to participate in scientific studies and restoration projects. Such partners as NOAA and the Coastal Federation are potential partners to facilitate citizen science projects at the Seashore, particularly to foster awareness of the challenge of managing the park in the face of climate change and the accompanying sea level rise and acidification.

This program has important implications in terms of resource protection and stewardship messaging.

■ **ARTISTS’ RETREAT.** Many venues on Cape Lookout National Seashore offer opportunities for artists’ retreats.

■ **COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS.**

The park receives frequent requests from groups that wish to perform service projects, such as beach clean-ups, etc. Unfortunately, all too often such initiatives end up creating more work for park staff. The following suggestions regarding “reprogramming” community service, if implemented, would enhance the meaning of the community service experience for participants while providing better service to the park and less labor for staff:

- ◆ Community service projects should be “institutionalized,” with clearly stated guidelines for participation, and a list of approved service projects.
- ◆ Unless advanced planning and a Volunteer-In-Parks agreement have been signed, organizations offering community service projects must bear the full cost of the project.
- ◆ The approach should be a holistic one that encourages organizations to see each project through from beginning to end. For example, some organizations bring their own tools and trash bags to beach cleanup, and remove the filled trash bags from the park themselves (in contrast to some organizations that leave trash bags for park staff to dispose of).
- ◆ Organizations who complete service projects under these guidelines should receive some kind of formal recognition or credit.
- ◆ Either staff guidance or some other detailed messaging is required for successfully guiding this approach to community service projects.

■ **PUBLICATIONS.** Publications continue to be an important means of conveying Seashore messages.

- ◆ A draft Unigrid brochure, larger



in size than the current one, as been created, which will include a new map and additional interpretive material. The new brochure should be completed. It should incorporate revisions such as the inclusion of the National Scenic Byway and the east coast kayak route that is being planned (NPS SER RTCA program).

- ◆ Continue to create new site bulletins on various topics and update old ones as the need arises. Continue to make these available to visitors through a variety of venues including the visitor centers, the park's website, and new technology such as e-readers.
 - ◆ Facilitate development of site bulletins for kids by kids.
 - ◆ Periodically upgrade the desktop publishing program(s) needed to produce and print park publications.
 - ◆ Encourage all staff to take photos for publication, and to explore other avenues of expanding the park-owned, copyright-free collection of images.
 - ◆ Designate a staff member—seasonal, intern, volunteer, etc.—to be responsible for systematic distribution of the newspaper to local venues to increase the effectiveness of the park newspaper.
- **FUNDING FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING.** Explore opportunities to continue grant-funded programs such as Teacher-Ranger-Teacher, the Youth Internship Program (YIP), Youth Partnership Program (YPP), and the Coastal Federation.

The Planning Team

CAPE LOOKOUT NATIONAL SEASHORE

Barbara Cohea, *Park Ranger*

Karen Duggan, *Lead Interpretive Ranger*

Tom Kelly, *Teacher Ranger Teacher*

Wouter Ketel, *Acting Chief of Interpretation/Management Assistant*

Richard Meissner, *VIP Coordinator*

Barry Munyan, *Chief, Visitor Protection*

Cheryl Munyan, *Seasonal Interpreter*

Mike Tranel, *Acting Superintendent*

Russ Wilson, *Former Superintendent*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HARPERS FERRY CENTER

Mary Mallen, *Interpretive Planner/Contracting Officer's Representative*

PARTNERS

Karen Amspacher, *Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center*

Windy Arey-Kent, *North Carolina Aquarium-Pine Knoll Shores*

Allison Besch, *North Carolina Maritime Museum*

Paul Branch, *Fort Macon State Park*

Christine Brin, *North Carolina Maritime Museum*

Richard Cecelski, *Carolina Ocean Studies*

Mary Crocker, *Cape Lookout National Seashore Volunteer*

Karen Davis, *Carteret County Schools*

Lori Davis, *Rachel Carson Reserve*

Maryann Fore, *Carteret County Schools*

Wayne Justice, *North Carolina Aquarium*

Kay Lewis, *Carolina Ocean Studies*

Carol Lohr, *Crystal Coast Tourism Development Authority*

Connie Mason, *former interpretive ranger, Cape Lookout NS*

Becky Misner, *Carteret County Schools*

Pam Morris, *Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center*

Sarah Phillips, *North Carolina Coastal Federation*

Keith Rittmaster, *Cape Lookout Studies Program, North Carolina Maritime Museum*

Laurie Streble, *North Carolina Maritime Museum*

Chris Yeomans, *Smyrna Elementary School/Carteret County Schools*

PLAN DESIGN

Ann Clausen and Vid Mednis,

INTERPRETIVE SOLUTIONS, INC.

732 Westbourne Road

West Chester, PA 19382

Appendix A

Cape Lookout National Seashore Visitor Profiles

Visitors come to Cape Lookout National Seashore primarily to take advantage of the recreational opportunities found on the islands. Others are drawn to the park because they are interested in lighthouses or the wild horses. A small number come to see where their ancestors once lived. Total recreational visits to the park are over 500,000 people per year. This number is derived from several different sources: manual counts of visitors arriving at three park visitor centers and of visitors using the ferries to reach the park; extrapolating the number of visitors arriving in their own boats; and the use of two (2) traffic counters on Harkers Island placed at the entrances to Harkers Island Visitor Center parking lot and the Harkers Island Day Use/Picnic Area parking lot. Of the 63,604 recorded as entering the visitor center parking lot during 2009, only 19,767 actually came into the visitor center. The tally of people entering the visitor center is kept manually by front desk staff. The difference can be explained by the layout of the parking lot and main road and the fact that 30-40 percent of park visitors entering the Harkers Island area are doing so expressly to access Core Sound water and island and lighthouse views, and to connect with the sea.

The length of stay in the park will depend on the interest of the visitor, and whether they have come only to the Harkers Island Visitor Center or have taken a ferry over to one of the islands. An average “visit” in the visitor center is from 30-45 minutes. This provides time to view the exhibits, ask questions, peruse the bookstore, and possibly see the orientation film.

The average length of visit for someone who has come on a day trip to the islands via ferry is about 2-4 hours. Other recreational

day-users, especially surf fishers, may stay 4-6 hours. For visitors staying overnight (camping or in cabins), the stay may be just one night, over a weekend, or for a week or more. Many folks return weekend after weekend throughout the summer or for a week or two every summer.

The months of June, July, and August receive the highest visitation, primarily from day users. Spring and fall are traditional fishing seasons with a rise in overnight usage, but with fewer day users. During a typical year, December through February are the months with the lowest visitation.

The majority of visitors to Cape Lookout National Seashore come from within North Carolina. Traditionally these visitors have made trips, sometimes for generations, to this section of the coast for summer visits or the seasonal recreational pursuits of surf fishing and waterfowl hunting. However, an increasing number of park visitors come from all fifty states and many foreign countries. Visitors to the park can be grouped into the following categories:

RECREATIONAL USERS: The park offers a broad range of water-based recreational opportunities. As the largest, mostly undeveloped area along the North Carolina coast, recreational users are finding the park a great place to surf fish, camp, kayak, shell, surf, snorkel, clam, crab, and wind surf, and to do other activities that are being crowded out of more developed coastal locations. Recreational visitors make up the majority of users of Cape Lookout National Seashore.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL RESIDENTS: North Carolina residents make up the majority of visitors and can be broken down further into local Carteret County residents and residents from more distant North Carolina locations such as Charlotte (Mecklenburg County); Raleigh (Wake

County); Greensboro (Guilford County); and other large urban areas within the state. Local residents comprise the majority of day users, while regional residents are more likely, by virtue of the distance, to visit the park as part of an overnight stay (either outside or in the park). These visitors use the park's visitor centers and other services infrequently, either because they are repeat visitors, or because they have entered the park from one of the numerous locations not convenient to the park visitor center. These visitors come to the park primarily to surf fish, enjoy a day at the beach, picnic/barbeque, and to hunt waterfowl.

INCIDENTAL VISITORS: An increasing number of visitors are finding the Harkers Island Visitor Center as they explore the area. Some stumble upon it and come in to ask what it is and to get directions. Others say they have known about the visitor center for awhile but have never had the time before to stop by for a visit.

SUBJECT MATTER ENTHUSIASTS: Many first time visitors and day trip visitors come to the park because they are interested in lighthouses or in seeing wild horses. Some are professional photographers taking stock photos or writers doing research for articles.

SCHOOL GROUPS: School groups visit the park for field trips in the spring before school ends. Many groups come to the Harkers Island Visitor Center and the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum. Some school groups will venture out to the seashore islands on their own, but most of the school groups visiting the park (over 20,000 in 2009) choose to use a commercial guide service such as Carolina Ocean Studies. Factors affecting school groups include: the logistical difficulty of visiting the park as a day trip (during the school day), the cost of ferry and guide services, and the availability of ferries that can carry large groups efficiently or on an extended trip of several hours. These groups vary widely in the age

of group members (elementary to college), and in their focus (a "fun day" vs. part of the curriculum).

SCOUT GROUPS: Scout groups visit the park for camping trips, primarily in the fall, winter, and spring. These groups can range in size from under ten participants to 50 and above. The number of groups per year varies widely. In addition, the local Boy Scout Pamlico Sea Base brings several kayak camping groups during the summer as part of their camp sessions. Although Boy Scouts make up the majority of these groups, Girl Scouts are also represented. Many of these scout groups request service projects in the park.

SUMMER CAMPS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS: Organized children's summer camps use the park as both a day trip activity and for overnight camping experiences. One camp brings their kids to the park as part of a sailing adventure with the children sailing themselves in small boats to and from the camp. Organizations for adults, such as Outward Bound, also bring groups to the park to kayak and camp. At least one bicycle touring group has made the Harkers Island Visitor Center one of its standard stops.

VIRTUAL VISITORS: A growing number of "visitors" use the park's website as the primary tool with which to plan their visit to the park. Others, who may or may not actually visit in person, use the website to find information about the park's cultural and natural history for school reports, magazine articles, and books.

While the website reflects the standard NPS content management system that prescribes the layout, there is a significant opportunity to increase the scope and wealth of content available to visitors.

Harpers Ferry Center
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Cape Lookout National Seashore
131 Charles St.
Harkers Island, NC 28531
(252) 728-2250
(252) 728-2160 FAX
www.nps.gov/caloc